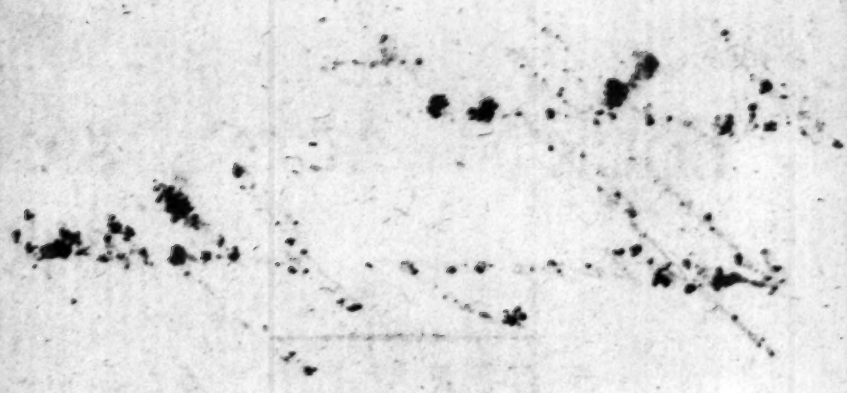
THE

COUNT DE HOENSDERN;

A

GERMAN TALE.



THE

COUNT DE HOENSDERN;

A GERMAN TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

CONSTANCE, THE PHAROS, ARGUS, &. &.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1793.

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TO

LADY ******,

THE FOLLOWING

TRIFLING WORK

IS INSCRIBED,

NOT AS DESERVING OF HER ATTENTION,

BUT AS A

TESTIMONY OF RESPECT

BY

HER MOST OBLIGED

AND

OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

THE

COUNT DE HOENSDERN.

CHAP. I.

"THANK Heaven, my Lord, the Baroneſs is ſafe," ſaid Madame Guemené, abruptly entering the room where the Baron de Bergzeyl was alone, walking backwards and forwards in great perturbation of mind.

"And what has ſhe brought me?" he aſked, turning ſhort round towards the door by which ſhe had come in.

"Alas, my Lord! I am ſorry to ſay it is a "daughter; but it is ſo ſweet a baby, I think if you "ſaw it, you would be glad it was a girl."

"Be *glad* it is a girl!" repeated the Baron. "Have I not told you why I wiſhed for a ſon? Be "*glad* it is a girl! I *expected* it would be a girl, "becauſe I wiſhed it otherwiſe."

"But pray, my Lord, come and look at it; the "the Baroneſs, too, wiſhes to ſee you."

"Tell her I am engaged now."

"But will you come ſoon?"

"Aye, aye."

Madame Guemené was retiring; he called to her—"Stop—who was in the room when the "child was born?"

" Nobody, I aſſure you, my lord, but thoſe who " had your orders. Do pray come to my Lady's " room."

" Not now: tell her I will viſit her a few hours " hence; and do you return to me again directly. " Does the Baroneſs know of what ſex the child " is?"

" No, indeed; we all told her it was a boy, and " and have dreſt it in boy's cloaths."

" What did ſhe ſay, when you ſaid it was " a boy?"

" She ſaid ſhe was glad, becauſe you were de- " ſirous of a ſon; but that for her part ſhe ſhould " have preferred a daughter."

" Right woman! If I had wiſhed for a daugh- " ter, ſhe would have prayed for a ſon. If I had " any weak ſuperſtition about me, I ſhould ſup- " poſe my being thwarted the conſequence of her " prayers. Well; tell her I will be with her by " and bye—take care ſhe is not undeceived, and " come again as I bid you."

" May all the pains of purgatory light on that " doating miſer, my wife's uncle!" exclaimed the diſappointed Baron, as ſoon as Madame had ſhut the door and left him to the indulgence of his rage, " Becauſe, truly, I was not a huſband of his chooſ- " ing for his niece, was my exiſtence to be ſtaked " on a contingency? Could I preſcribe a ſex to " the child? was any greater merit to accrue to " me for being the father of a male than " of a female, that he ſhould by his will " deprive me and mine entirely of inheri- " tance, unleſs the Baroneſs's firſt child was a " ſon? And to think I not only muſt relinquiſh all " my proſpect of retrieving a ruined fortune, but " ſurrender it to my bittereſt enemy, her ſiſter's " huſband! O, it is too ſtabbing! But yet I will " thank the ſeverity of this ſentence—perhaps " had it been more lenient, I might have been

" more

" more ſubmiſſive—'tis its all-powerful ſeverity " that ſtimulates me to an ingenuous deceit. At " all events the child ſhall paſs for what I wiſh it: " who knows but another year may indeed bring " me a ſon? After a ſhort time it will be eaſy to " confound obſervers. The difference of one year, " though great when oppoſed to nothing, is ſoon " loſt and undiſcernible. The experiment at leaſt " is worth making—the caſtle and domain of the " Count de Hoenſdern ſhall not, muſt not be loſt " for ſcruples; beſide, the five thouſand rix-dol- " lars which the churl bequeathed me out of it, " only on the arbitrary condition that this child " proved a ſon, are neceſſary to my ſubſiſtence. " Did the old man dote ſo entirely as to ſuppoſe if " I had a daughter, I ſhould not need a living?"

No farther inſight could a by-ſtander have obtained into the particular circumſtances the Baron ſo deplored and execrated, before Madame Guemené returned, obedient to his orders. Her haſte outwent the impetuous purport of his command; but it was the haſte of terror not of alacrity.

" O come! come inſtantly, my Lord!" ſaid ſhe, " if you would ſee the Baroneſs alive—ſhe is dy- " ing, and ſhe calls for you!"

He had not time to aſk himſelf whether he would or would not obey the ſummons. Perhaps, had he put the queſtion to his heart, it would have anſwered no; for in the two years of his marriage, his conduct had been uniformly unconforming to his wife. She had married him againſt the conſent of her friends, for love ſolely: he had married her apparently from the ſame motive, but really with views the moſt intereſted. The wealth ſhe had brought him was immediately conſumed by previous debts and unbounded extravagance. Diſappointed in his expectations of finding his ſituation eaſed, he had grown moroſe; vexed at her uncle's

cautious care to preſerve his property in the male line, he had vented his ill humour on the amiable Baroneſs; and now entirely balked by the miſtake nature had made in the ſex of the infant ſhe had ſent into the world, he cared little for the mother's exiſtence, but as it gave him a chance for ſucceſsful deceit if ſhe ſhould be more lucky in her next production. But of this all hope was ſoon precluded; for ſhe lived only a few weeks after the birth of her child, and during that time in a ſtate of almoſt total inſenſibility.

The world judges by externals, and, therefore is rightly ſtyled the *misjudging* world. While the Baron was ſuffering all the tormenting anxiety attendant on the contrivance of a very delicate and important ſcheme of diſhoneſty, he was extolled for the attachment he ſhewed to his deceaſed wife's memory. She had loved him too ſincerely ever to admit a confidant in her misfortunes. Her ſorrows ſhe conſidered as the puniſhment of wilfulneſs; and theſe two motives kept the world entirely ignorant that ſhe was unhappy; but unhappy ſhe was; for her affection to he huſband, though it rendered her patient under ill-treatment, did not at all obſcure her judgment or conceal his foibles from her.

On hearing of her death, he ſtamped, he raved, he ſighed, he was in violent perturbation. Sleep fled his eyes; he loathed food; he could not endure to ſee his child; he ſecluded himſelf from all ſociety; and was indeed, a mourner. To the kind enquiries of friends and neighbours, the domeſtics returned accounts of their maſter's ſullen refuſal of all comfort. The Baroneſs had been greatly and generally beloved; and now he ſhared with her in the public concern. See, cries one Xantippe to her huſband, how ſome men regard their wives—Aye, replied the upbraided Socrates, but it is only when they *deſerve* their regard.—

Poor

Poor gentleman! exclaimed a tender-hearted old maid, I fear his grief will kill him.—What would I give for ſo charming a huſband! cries a young one. I could die with pleaſure if I were ſure to be ſo lamented.

Suppoſitions thus honourable for him, but which ſtill more loudly and highly commended the prudence and conjugal fidelity of the deceaſed lady, were in a few days rendered 'confirmations ſtrong' by the doleful widower's quitting Vienna, where the Baroneſs died, and retreating to Lauffen, in Bavaria. He took with him his infant, and the before-named Madame Guemené. None other, either his friends or domeſtics, were permitted to accompany or to follow him. The pitying world gave him another ſigh. His afflictions, they aſſerted, drove him into exile: he could endure nothing that reminded him of his dear Baroneſs. But mark, ſaid an old ſpeculator, as much a dupe as the groſſeſt of the herd, how nature inſiſts on her rights: Agonized, as without doubt the Baron is by whatever refreſhes his remembrance, he yet cannot quit the child though it be his moſt torturing memorial. So are mortals doomed to bear about with them their miſeres: thus it is that we, life's galley-ſlaves, tug at the oar, and graſp the chain that galls us. A truce, ye ignorant, with your confident gueſſes, and your air-bubble reflections! Let us ſee to what it was that the Baron de Bergzeyl really retired.

CHAP. II.

NO ſooner had Madame Guemené, whom the indiſpoſition of her young charge had forced to halt on the road, joined the Baron in his obſcure retreat at Lauffen, than he communicated to her the whole of his intentions and views. He well knew he could ſafely confide in her: ſhe was diſtantly related to him, too poor to aſſert any will of her own, and too dependent on him to have any. She was by birth French, had little intellectual recommendation, but none of the obſtinacy of ignorance. She was not vicious; and, perhaps, had ſhe been independent, had been virtuous; but the Baron, her patron, was her *grand monarque*, and Madame Guemené was born the ſubject and educated the ſlave of abſolute monarchy.

"We are now, Madame," ſaid the Baron to her at their firſt interview, "to ſettle how we ſhall "act ſo as to prevent the conſequences of this un- "fortunate diſappointment in the child's ſex. At "this obſcure place no impertinent diſcovery can "overtake us. I have told you that it is my fixed "determination, at all events, to bring this infant "up as a ſon. You have promiſed me your aid, "and you muſt now enter on the performance of "your promiſe."

Madame bowed acquieſcence, and he proceeded:

"You have engaged to nurſe the child through "its ſtate of infancy yourſelf, without ever com- "mitting it for a moment, unleſs under your own

eye,

"eye, into other hands. As it has loſt with its
"mother its natural food, we are juſtified in the
"method we adopt; and from its perfect form
"and healthy appearance we may hope for ſucceſs.
"To your management, therefore, I leave her, till
"I find her dawning underſtanding requires my
"interference."

Madame interpoſed aſſurances that ſhe might be ſafely truſted: and, indeed, ſhe might; for as no one could be ſo deeply intereſted in her fidelity as the Baron, no one would have bribed her higher than he did. The reader would perhaps, wiſh to know what were the terms offered and accepted; but, alas! he muſt be diſappointed; for the parties had impoſed upon themſelves the caution of conſpirators, and whiſpered too low even for a biographer to overhear.

Other matters, ſerving but to fill up the back-ground of the ſcene, were next diſcuſſed and adjuſted. The Baron propoſed, and in ſo doing let it be acknowledged he was prudent, to remain where he was, in a houſe little better than a cottage, the only property his profuſion had left him, and which he could not alienate, till he had aſcertained the ſucceſs of his endeavours to impoſe on thoſe whom in his heart he confeſſed, but with his tongue denied, to be the Count de Hoenſdern's rightful heirs. A few, very few ſervants, ſuch as were too low and too ignorant to be dangerous, would now content him who had ſpent an ample income in maintaining a ducal retinue. A lonely ſequeſtered ſpot was his choice, who once could not breathe out of the intoxicating air of a capital; and he who had excuſed foibles and veiled vices under the pretext of a love for elegant ſociety, was to take up with ſolitude, or the far more mortifying company of ſuch as he thoroughly deſpiſed.

What could bring about ſuch a change, you aſk? Suffer me to digreſs, and I will explain it to you.

Adjoining to the temple of Plutus are three avenues in which the votaries of the deity are allowed to amuſe themſelves; for be it known, moſt governments ſee the policy of allowing their ſlaves a degree of recreation. One of theſe avenues is named Parſimony, another Covetouſneſs, and the third, Avarice. The firſt is uniformly narrow, terminating in one object; the ſecond ſpacious, almoſt to boundleſſneſs, and comprehending an immenſe proſpect; the laſt differs from the others in being totally dark, narrow in its entrance, deep in its termination, and encloſed with numberleſs doors, operating as valves in water-engines, which receive all and part with nothing.

Different qualifications of mind and temper are requiſite for obtaining a place in theſe crowded avenues. For that parſimony, a ſpecies of ſelf-denial and forbearance is indiſpenſably neceſſary, amounting nearly to a virtue, and which at leaſt has this recommendation, that it has often prolonged the lives of thoſe who attained to it. For a good ſituation in the extenſive path of Covetouſneſs, no qualification is neceſſary except a victory over all principle; even conſiſtency, ſo troubleſome to be obſerved by perſons acting *ad libitum*, may here be diſpenſed with, ſince it is allowed to diſpenſe with one hand and graſp with the other at the ſame inſtant. But Avarice receives none to its cells till they have received from nature or attained by application, a ſteady inflexibility of ſoul, deaf to the widow's cries and the orphan's prayers, dead to every ſenſation of humanity, and loſt to all pleaſure but heaping together uſeleſsly and endleſsly, that commodity which the philoſopher in vain curſes when he recollects that were it removed, its votaries would erect ſomewhat elſe in its ſtead, as the

Iſraelites

Iſraelites when they had loſt their Moſes ſet up a calf.

In the regions of Covetouſneſs, then, as beſt ſuiting his negative accompliſhments, our Baron had taken his ſtation; and the power he devoted himſelf to, by the omnipotency of its magic, wrought inſtantaneouſly the change above deſcribed. Pleaſure he ſtill purſued; but it was pleaſure of the moſt ſordid kind, and he ſoon found that the purſuit of it, by inſenſible but rapid degrees, deprived him of all the enjoymenes he once thought neceſſary to his exiſtence. In ſhort he became involuntarily a ſerious man, and literally, that he might retain the vanities of this world, he almoſt entirely relinquiſhed them.

For what difference can we diſcover between his ſituation now that he was bent on iniquitouſly detaining the right of another, and what it would have been had he nobly yielded it? Poverty could not have forced him to cloſer privacy than did cowardly guilt.—To ſhun

——— "The ſcorn
"Which virtue ſunk to poverty would meet,
"From giddy faſhion and low minded pride,"

requires neither greater philoſophy nor greater circumſpection than he was compelled to practiſe for a far leſs laudable purpoſe. So that vice, as it were, ſtaring him in the face while ſhe cheated him, was impoſing on him the ſhackles of virtue without a proſpect of obtaining for him her rewards.

But is this a new ſituation? I grant it is not. The libertine of every country, every age, can bear teſtimony to its frequency. The ill-endured abſtinence of ſickneſs; the inflexible chains of poverty, and above all, the imbecilities of decrepi-

tude, are punishments borrowed by vice of her sworn enemy; and in her hand the rod has double force; for she has no mercy with which to temper severity, and hope is a stranger to her.

CHAP. III.

THE first step the Baron took for his security, was to write the following letter to the Countess de Vringen, his deceased wife's sister. The Count and he were not on corresponding terms.

"DEAR MADAM,

"TILL this hour my sorrows have not allowed "me a respite sufficient for the purpose of informing you of them myself. From other hands you "have heard of your and my irreparable loss; but "not even my own expressions can give you an "idea of what I suffer by it.

"I have lost the friend, the partner of my heart, "at a time when all her attractions were in their "full force, and when our tie seemed in its perfect "strength. That she has left me a son, even with "all its consequences, is to me no consolation: on "the contrary, it aggravates my grief, since it forces "me to struggle against it. Ah! why if a stabbing memorial, an inverted shadow of my departed happiness must remain, why did not nature form it of the other sex? Why had I not "rather a daughter in whose form and features I "might trace the mother? In whose tenderness I "might find repose, and whose sympathy might "weep with me at the sorrow she renewed?

"Can

"Can wealth or title abate grief? Can I forget "the Baroneſs de Bergzeyl becauſe I look on the "Count de Hoenſdern? It cannot be—Were it "not for the right of my child, O how gladly "would I forgo all the benefits attached to his ſex, "and bury myſelf with him in impenetrable ſoli- "tude, where nothing but the echo of my com- "plaints ſhould diſturb the mournful ſilence!

"But quiet is denied me. I am indeed for the "preſent, in a ſituation nearly ſuited to my wiſhes, "and here in the lonelineſs of Lauſſen will I re- "main till the heavy hand of grief abates its preſ- "ſure. In the mean time, my good friend Ma- "dame Guemene takes charge of my poor boy. "She is here with me; I cannot endure ſepara- "tion from the only relic of my hearts poſſeſſion.

"If your huſband feels his enmity towards me "increaſed by the diſappointment your ſiſter's off- "ſpring has proved, let him have the comfort of "knowing the bleſſing comes to me when I have loſt "the power of enjoying it. My wiſhes are his: "I weep over my boy and chide his innocent form "that it is what a thouſand parents would bleſs.

"Adieu. A wiſh to ſee you, or an offer to "viſit you, would be impertinent after what has "paſſed between our families; but it will always "be a ſatisfaction to me to ſubſcribe myſelf

"Your devoted humble Servant,

"THE BARON DE BERGZEYL."

The Counteſs de Vringen was a woman, from whoſe ſuſpicion or jealouſy nothing was to be feared. The Baron's letter impoſed on her, and the utmoſt of her endeavours were extended to prevent the accumulation of animoſity in her huſband's mind. Once already ſhe had prevented a duel between the incongruous relatives; and now ſhe was happy to perceive, that as the diſappointment was not unlooked for, it was not intolerable: particular

domeſtic

domeſtic circumſtances rendered her leſs ſanguine in her children's intereſts than might have been expected. In ſhort ſhe was very well ſatisfied with the decree of Heaven: their family conſiſted of only two ſons; the eſtate was large and improving; and though the Count was a man of no very amiable temper, yet as exceſſive irritability, and a vindictive diſpoſition were his principal faults, as there here appeared no ground for exerciſing either to his advantage, the ferment preſently abated, and he ſunk into moroſe tranquillity.

To her brother-in-law's letter the Counteſs returned an anſwer, from which he might underſtand that ſhe ſaw through the veil of his grief: ſhe, indeed, hoped ſomething ſerious was ſpringing up in his mind. Paternal attachment and care for his offſpring, now dependent on him alone, might produce better ſentiments and more regular conduct than he could hitherto boaſt. She ſaid whatever could encourage dawning virtue, and concluded by offering, as far as the divided ſtate of their families would admit, to aid him in the arduous taſk conſigned to him.

Exulting in the paſſive acquieſcence promiſed him, he now boldly entered on the lucrative rewards of his deceit, and in a few months removed himſelf and the infant impoſtor to Hoenſdern Caſtle. Every day contributed to his ſecurity; not a doubt was whiſpered; not the leaſt curioſity was excited. Madame Guemené was faithful to her truſt: ſhe, and ſhe alone, tended the child, never ſuffering it to be for a moment out of her ſight, or giving into the arms of any one. Affecting a degree of ſtate that *the Counts high birth* juſtified her in, ſhe had it waited on with the moſt diſtant reſpect. It had been baptiſed by the name of Ypſilanti.

The

The ſcrupulous fidelity of Madame Guemené might have rendered the Baron perfectly eaſy; but in the courſe of a year he had acquired ſuch a habit of caution, that it was no longer in his power to reſume his former modes of life. Society was unpleaſant; for he feared detection even in the looks and common interrogatories of every one he met. His foreſight taught him the neceſſity of ſetting out in his carrer of hypocriſy as he meant to continue it. The viſits of his friends at this early period of it could not be productive of danger; if Ypſilanti was inquired for, Madame Guemené attended with it; it received the careſſes of thoſe who wiſhed to ſee it, and was then immediately reſtored to its nurſery, every one preſent admiring the punctilious care with which the Baron de Bergzeyl diſcharged the duties of a ſole parent. "But," ſaid the careful father to himſelf, "what will be the "conſequence a few years hence? When the child "has in years outgrown female management, ſuch "perfect ſecluſion ſuddenly practiſed will excite "alarm: the boy muſt ſoon be company for men, and "they will expect he ſhould be ſo. If I confi-"dently act as one who has no diſcovery to fear, "ruin awaits my plans. To alter the human "form, to diſguiſe the apparent difference of ſex is "impoſſible; and from the child's preſent delicacy "of make, there is every reaſon to fear it will be "but too viſible. A common obſerver may ſuſpect "me, an acute will betray me. I, therefore, "have but one ſecure courſe to take. I will af-"fect ſingularity in my mode of education, and I "will keep the Count de Hoenſdern in as ſtrict a ſo-"litude as poſſible, till I think her underſtanding "ſtrong enough to be truſted with the myſtery "attached to her. She ſhall then know how I

"have

" have laboured for her advantage; and I ſhall
" transfer to her the taſk of impoſition."

CHAP. IV.

JUSTICE, the right of good and bad, demands that in the Baron's favour it ſhould be obſerved, that however engroſſed his thoughts were by the ſcheme he was perfecting, they were not wholly confined to it without admitting more laudable cares for the welfare of his infant. Separated as we have before ſtated, from his accuſtomed pleaſures by his eagerneſs to preſerve them, his attention ſoon became rivetted to his child: in her alſo centered his affections, and, without deſiring it, he lived, with principles far different, a life that muſt be called regular, and would have been moral but for its ultimate object.

An education uncommonly comprehenſive had been liberally beſtowed on his younger years; and as it met a natural underſtanding well framed to give it energy, the Baron ſtood high in the rank of men of learning and genius; but a love of leſs refined purſuits had eclipſed his talents, and a bad temper had diſpoſed him to undervalue them. In the ſolitude of Lauffen he had again dipped into books, as ſomewhat better company than his own ruminations, and the caſual renewal of his acquaintance with them, had brought with it a zeſt unfelt before. At Hoenſdern he found a good library and very little ſociety; he was, therefore, at once invited and compelled to continue his newly-reſumed habits.

Another

Another conſideration alſo made him ſtudious. In the buſineſs of educating his child, it would be dangerous to admit many aſſiſtants. Some wouldbe indiſpenſibly neceſſary to inſtruct her in particular branches of ſcience, and to form her perſon; but the province of her mind, on which alone he could depend for a concurrence in his project, he reſerved to himſelf; and it was no eaſy matter to reſolve what principles to inſtil into it, as thoſe of common practice would, perhaps, not be ſufficiently potent for the great purpoſe he muſt effect, and if he taught her the more crooked labyrinth of craft, ſhe might, ere long, prove too conning for himſelf. Neither the Jewiſh diſpenſation, nor the more elegant precepts of beautiful Chriſtianity, were at all ſuited to his purpoſe. The firſt taught even handed juſtice between man and man, a virtue ſhe was made even in her cradle to infringe: the latter was ſtill more inimical to temporal intereſt, as it preached abſtinence, and voluntary reſignation of thoſe things for the enjoyment of which he was training her.

After many and many gloomy deliberations on a ſubject ſo important, for the eyes of a parent's mind outſtrip all time, and annihilating all ſpace, pierce through the tedious proceſs of years in an inſtant, he reſolved her religion ſhould be ritual, and her morality heathen; and yet, while he rejected the beſt means of rendering her virtuous, he determined to form her after a model of perfection he had dreſſed up in his mind.

Madame Guemené, whom though he did not condeſcend to conſult, he always tutored ſo as to ſecure her from erring through ignorance, aided his plans in a way that rendered them what he meant, but could not achieve. She, a devout daughter of the church of Rome, was happy in finding ſuch ſcope left to her zeal: ſhe was ſincerely deſirous to

infuſe into the ductile mind of her charge, thoſe principles on which religion muſt be founded: but aware that if ſhe adduced them from their prime origin, the whole ſucceſs of the Baron's ſcheme might be blaſted, ſhe prudently interpoſed a medium that would ſerve all purpoſes. To preach unreſerved obedience to the will of the Deity, when her pupil was *fairly* inſtructed in it, would have been to denounce war againſt the Baron: to falſify the terms on which future happineſs was offered, was in Madame's opinion ſhocking impiety: but there ſtill remained a middle path; a path which, ſhe was certain, thoſe even who ſtyled themſelves *the Society of Jeſus*, muſt approve, particularly as, ſhould their project be fruſtrated, the great poſſeſſion of the Count de Hoenſdern muſt revert to a Lutheran family, a loſs which the prudent œconomy of the ſeven-hilled city always regarded with indignation and abhorrence.

Her ingenuity thus aided, ſuggeſted to her the poſſibility of ſetting up for her *elève's* convenience, a kind of ſub-deity, an interpreter to the commands of the Almighty, and this was her father, whom, from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, ſhe taught her implicitly to obey; and when forced to annex ſome reward to, or to adduce ſome ſubſtantial reaſon for this injoined obedience, ſhe repreſented it as highly acceptable to Him whom truth compelled her to acknowledge we all depended on. Thus by only exaggerating the reality, ſo much we muſt confeſs as almoſt to deſtroy it, ſhe hoped ſhe thoroughly diſcharged her duty to all parties, either acting in, or obſerving the iniquitous buſineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE experience of three years had now confirmed the Baron in his reſolution, and had ſtamped with the commendation of prudence and diſcretion both his conduct and that of Madame. The child gave already indubitable evidence of a perfect underſtanding and a well-eſtabliſhed conſtitution; but unfortunately attended with ſuch a ſpecies of beauty as ſeemed to ſhrink from all endeavours to ſpoil or roughen it. A complexion, clear and delicate to the higheſt degree, was rendered brilliant by the roſes with which health graced it; and eyes of the tendereſt blue, ſeemed to ſtand as a guard to that and to a profuſion of flaxen hair, as if they had ſaid, —"We, immutable in our colour, will bear wit-"neſs againſt all arts and deceptions uſed to diſ-"guiſe her feminine charms."—In ſhort, nothing availed to procure for Ypſilanti a boyiſh face. She was expoſed to the ſun, the wind, and the rain, inured to pinching cold, and as much of its oppoſite extreme as her country afforded; but integrity ſeemed a conſtituent part of her nature, and ſhe was ſtill the fair blooming Ypſilanti.

Her father ſaw his ill ſucceſs at once with concern and delight. He dreaded its conſequences, and was ſtung when thoſe to whom he was obliged to produce her, remarked on her ſingular beauty; but yet too much a parent to wiſh his child leſs gifted, and, perhaps, not the worſe man for the regularity he had been compelled to, he exulted in her pre-eminent endowments, and watched the infant lovlineſs expanding with every riſing ſun.

Giving

Giving up as hopeleſs his endeavours on this point, and depending much on a change of dreſs, he turned his attention more entirely towards the formation of her manners, and that the misfortune on one ſide might not have any addition from the other, he ſaw the neceſſity of running ſome hazard to avoid impending miſchief. His ſagacity, doubled by his intereſt, taught him that even a boy brought up amongſt women loſes much of his manly character. What then muſt be the conſequence if Ypſilanti, whom every hour diſcovered to be more and more attached to female occupations and habits, was left entirely to the management of Madame?

On this ſubject he conſulted his wary aſſiſtant, who concurred in all his opinions, and thought with him, that the only remedy for the evil was, to find for their charge ſome little boyiſh ſociety, in which ſhe might learn robuſt amuſements, and ſhake off ſome part of her troubleſome and dangerous effeminacy. But this required ſtill greater caution than any thing that had yet preſented itſelf. In retirement we are often ſafe, when half a ſtep from our retreat would lead us into perils. Nothing but Madame's tried integrity and her ſolemn promiſe on no conſideration ever to let the child wander from her eye, could have calmed the terrors of her employer, or have ſtimulated him to ſeek the fruits of ſuch a precipice as he was approaching.

To all thoſe perſons or families that his memory firſt pointed out as fit for his purpoſe, ſome weighty objections were attached. A farther recapitulation was not more ſucceſsful. He was at preſent ſecure under the character of an odd, unſociable man, who was bringing up a very promiſing infant in a very unpromiſing way. If once he departed from his magic circle, this rampart was thrown down;

down; the tide was let on him, and he was expoſed to all the miſchiefs of prying curioſity. He had not only his own advantage now in view: the ſoil of his mind had produced, with abundance of weeds, the more noble plant of parental love; he could not, therefore, be content with chuſing even a *play-fellow* for his child without conſulting her pleaſure as well as his own ſecurity. In acquiring manners foreign to her ſex, he feared ſhe might be taught roughly. The common amuſements of boys are ſuch as are frequently attended with pain and peril. "And how," ſaid he, "could I indure to "ſee this delicate epitome of all that charms in "woman, deformed by an unlucky blow, or ſmart-"ing under the brutal inadvertance of ſuch ſchool-"boys as I remember myſelf? And yet if I once "turn her amongſt boys, it would expoſe me to "contempt and ridicule if I ſhield her."

The matter hung for ſome months in ſuſpenſe, and Ypſilanti was every day giving freſh proofs of effeminacy. She learnt with avidity whatever her infant mind could graſp: that part of her compoſition ſeemed of no ſex; but her perſonal habits were apace fixing: exquiſitely ſenſible to pain and pleaſure; alive all over, and timid to exceſs; grateful, fond, eaſily provoked, but ſtill ſooner appeaſed; ſubmiſſive to her father, and attached to Madame as her mother; ſhrewd, playful, and poſſeſſing ſpirits far beyond her ſtrength; ſhe not only proclaimed her ſex by her countenance and form, but every motion, every ſentiment was woman, unalterably woman.—"Something muſt be done," ſaid the Baron, "to correct this: but "what?—"It drives me mad to think of it."

The circumjacent neighbourhood conſiſted for the moſt part of noble or opulent families, with very little intermixture of plebeians. The Baron

was

was on terms of civility with all; and gladly would many of them have improved that diſtant ſort of kindneſs into intimacy, but his fears predominated; and after much rumination, he reſolved rather to hazard the dangers of ſolitude than detection.

CHAP. VI.

HE was in this ſtate of mind reſolved, but not contented; convinced, but not ſatisfied: when ſtrolling, one fine autumn morning, into a large wood which ſkreened the caſtle on the north, he met a gentleman of about his own age walking with a book in his hand, on which his attention was ſo earneſtly fixed, that till the ſound of a foot made him ſtart, he did not perceive any one approaching. He then returned the Baron's well bred ſalutation and paſſed on.

Neither the face nor perſon of this gentleman were known to the Baron: his dreſs beſpoke him of military rank, and on his countenance were deeply impreſſed marks of a contemplative mind.

On the following day he was again in the wood: the Baron then ſaw him ſitting on the trunk of a tree that had been felled: he was reading as intently as before. The Baron felt a ſtrong inclination to accoſt him; but the ſocial principle was combated by that of fear, and he continued his walk another way.

Something akin to curioſity drew him about the ſame hour of the next day near this ſpot: the ſtranger was not there, but ſoon appeared. Perhaps the

the Baron now wanted an apology for addreſſing him.—" It would be downright rudeneſs," ſaid he to himſelf, " to meet a perſon of his appearance " day after day, and on my own ground, without " ſpeaking."—This decided on, he went forward; and after a few conciliatory ſentences, anſwered by the ſtranger in the ſame temper, they ſeated themſelves together on the proſtrate tree—the ſtranger put up his book, and gave the Baron an opportunity of beginning converſation by inquiring what author he was reading. It was one of the Greek hiſtorians whoſe works were equally well known to both. Each ſeemed delighted to meet a ſcholar in the other: two hours ſlid imperceptibly away in comparing opinions; and they parted with a wiſh that they might often meet. Who the ſtranger was the Baron did not learn; he did not chuſe to excite curioſity by gratifying his own: it was with ſome difficulty he repreſſed his inclination to invite him to the caſtle; but determining to ſee a little farther ere he commenced a friendſhip, he poſtponed it, and intimated inſtead, that when the weather permitted, that part of the wood was his diurnal walk.

Perhaps the reader may not be ſo phlegmatic as our Baron; he cannot have the ſame motive to prudent caution; and, therefore, ſurely the curioſity we will ſuppoſe him to have, may be innocently indulged. But firſt let us give him an idea of the perſon for whom we are about to intereſt him.

In perſon, then, he was of a middle height, but of emaciated bulk. His countenance beſpoke acute feeling and cauſe to feel. It was penſive, but not dejected; it was melancholy, but not moroſe: benevolence was its characteriſtic, and it was a ſtronger character of it; for it ſhone through irrefragable evidence, as powerful as phyſiognomy could bear, that the world had preſſed hard on the mind it accompanied. In his

eyes

eyes were all the tokens of a ſpirit that misfortune could not ſubdue: they had loſt none of the energy that beſpeaks a ſoul; there was in them the triumph of integrity and conſcious ſuperiority; nor were they leſs animated when gratitude for the Baron's condeſcending familiarity ſuffuſed a dew over them, than when they expreſſed the rapture the Greek hiſtorian's page excited.

Appearances ſuch as theſe accorded ill with a regimental coat on which the genius of parſimony had been *laviſhly* diſplayed. They accorded ill, if the ideal fitneſs of things is our ſtandard; but they were in perfect harmony, if we adopt the faſhion of the world as our guide. Merit and rags ſhould never be ſeen together. Alas! how ſeldom are they ſeen aſunder!

Such was the perſon and outline of Colonel Luſinguen. The features of his hiſtory we reſerve for a new chapter, firſt premiſing, that he reſted in the ſame ſort of ignorance as the Baron, but with ſtill greater curioſity.

CHAP. VII.

TO underſtand clearly the ſituation of Colonel Luſinguen, we muſt trace his hiſtory a little farther back than his birth.

He was a mongrel, the offspring of a German and a Piedmonteſe. His father inherited a very moderate patrimony, but which was rendered a very comfortable ſubſiſtence by the addition of high rank and pay in the Emperor's army, which his moral integrity and perſonal ſervices early in life

life obtained. He was a Lutheran, a man of moderate intellectual endowments, and rather approaching to what we call weak; but the good qualities of his heart atoned for the deficiencies of his head, and his steady perseverance in what he thought his duty, whenever he could discover what that was, saved him from almost the errors want of judgment could have betrayed him. Thus we see a child newly committed to its legs, and too weak to use them to advantage, if it be habitually cautious, escapes those accidents from which greater strength, undirected by prudence, is no preservative.

The mother of Colonel Lusinguen did not at all resemble her husband. She, an Italian by country and a Piedmontese by nature, possessed neither his deficiencies nor redundancies. She was of a good family, but a family that had outlived its means of honourable support. Her parents had been retainers in the Court of Turin, and on their decease she, then an infant of not more than seven years old, was left destitute of protection and provision. The Queen of Sardinia, with whom her mother had been in some measure a favourite, extended her munificence to the orphan. She was at the charge of her education, and when that was completed took her into the number of her personal attendants; but soon finding the young lady of a temper not at all disposed to suffer those near her to rest in peace, and complaints daily coming to her ears of the jealousies and strifes she took delight in stirring up, her Majesty formed a resolution of placing her in a convent, then establishing but not prefected, in the neighbourhood of Turin.

The young lady's turn of mind was too well known to lead any one into the error of supposing such a change would be gratifying to her. She

possessed

poſſeſſed a ſmall ſtock of beauty, of which ſhe was deſirous to make the moſt, and aiding it by all the cunning of her country, ſhe had frequently and not unſucceſsfully ſpread ſnares to catch male hearts. Her pride had now and then prevented her from following up a victory. She ſighed for admiration in neral; but whenever matters approached to an *eclairciſſement*, ſhe proved that *ſublunary* intereſts were not below her regard, and that ſhe meant to barter her perſon only againſt wealth and honours. A conduct ſuch as this, evinced an unamiable mind, and was one of the motives that iuduced her patroneſs to adopt the intention we have mentioned.

Till the convent was ready for the reception of its ſequſtered inhabitants, the Queen enjoined all thoſe who knew of her deſign to keep it ſtrictly a ſecret from her troubleſome *elève*; but it afforded too ſweet an opportunity of mortifying her to be long undivulged. On occaſion of her having very much provoked a young lady in the ſame ſituation as herſelf, ſhe was, with all taunt of victorious malice and the glee of inſidions revenge, threatened by her ſhe had injured with her approaching ſecluſion. It had in one way its effect: the culprit was thunderſtruck; the war of words over, and though the enmity might ſubſiſt, it was for ever ſuſpended by the neceſſity one of the parties was under of withdrawing her attention to her own immediate intereſts.

The lady, who in the heat of paſſion had betrayed her truſt, had ſcarcely uttered the words before ſhe repented her incaution, nor were her ſufferings much leſs than her adverſary's. She could not doubt that the Queen would ſoon be made acquainted with her diſobedience, and that ſhe would puniſh it by a deprivation of her favour; perhaps by immuring her alſo, to whom it would

ſcarcely

ſcarcely have been a more agreeable remove than to her over whom it impended.

But ſhe had little real cauſe for apprehenſion. The witneſs of her failure we have already ſaid was a Piedmonteſe, and in the craft of Piedmont conſiſted her ſecurity. To have gone inſtantly to the Queen; to have revealed all ſhe had heard; and to have endeavoured by humility to deprecate her wrath, would have been the *direct* road to obtain her wiſhes; it was a path ſhe left to be trod by the ſimple ones; it might have ſuited a Savoyard genius, but not her's. She well knew if the reſolution was once taken, open reſiſtance would avail her little; nay, ſhe feared it might accelerate her misfortune; and though ſhe in her own mind was determined no power on earth ſhould force her to a life ſhe deteſted more than death, ſhe ſaw it was her policy to let her enemies go on undiſturbed either by her complaints or oppoſition.

The cowardice of the lady ſhe had ſo recently quarrelled with, however, gave her an opportunity of revenge ſhe could not *with an eaſy conſcience* paſs over. In a few hours after their bitter altercation, or rather downright ſcolding, and while the threatened nun was ruminating how beſt to avert the ſtorm over her head, her terrified enemy ſought her, and holding out all the allurements of ſorrow and reconciliation, by degrees confeſſed how far ſhe had overſtepped the limits of her duty, and entreated her ſhe had unintentionally befriended, by warning her to join with her in keeping this failure from the Queen's knowledge.

Without this puſillanimous confeſſion and requeſt ſhe would have been ſafe: having made it, ſhe was in the midſt of the very danger ſhe deſired to avoid; for the *religious ſiſter elect* had already nearly reſolved on the part ſhe would act; and

it would have compriſed in it ſilence and hypocritical ſubmiſſion; but now, finding ſhe could do miſchief, ſhe diſdained the former, and for once in her life ſpoke truth, (a weakneſs ſhe was not often to be charged with) by obſtinately refuſing the compliance aſked of her, and by aſſuring her humbled adverſary that ſhe held herſelf obliged to her not only for the warning ſhe had given her, but for the opportunity ſhe now preſented her of a ſweet revenge. She then without delay procured acceſs to the Queen; and giving way to thoſe expreſſions of ſorrow which ſerved for indications of duty and attachment, but were in reality nothing leſs, ſhe threw herſelf on her knees before her, and reſpectfully reproached her for having formed ſuch a deſign without communicating it to her.—"If," ſaid ſhe, "your Majeſty kept me ignorant "of your intention, becauſe you thought it would "be unpleaſant to me, I hold myſelf infi-"nitely indebted to your tender regard; but how "ill known to you muſt my wiſhes be! How much "enjoyment you have deprived me of! The life you "have deſtined me to, is that of all others I have "ſighed for; and but for my apprehenſions that "the ſuggeſtion of ſuch an inclination might ſeem "an ungrateful wiſh to leave you, I would long "ſince have ſupplicated your permiſſion to attach "myſelf to ſome one of the religious ſocieties al-"ready eſtabliſhed. O what peace and happineſs "is in proſpect for me!———When, O gracious "Queen! when ſhall I be united to this delightful "ſiſterhood? How impatiently ſhall I count the "moments till I am admitted within thoſe hallow-"ed walls!"

With ſagacious royalty there can be little hope of ſucceeding by impoſture. An elevated ſituation commands a large proſpect; and if crowned heads, by chance or good fortune, eſcape being

hood

hood-winked in their infancy by the hand of flattery, they and they alone may develope the receſſes of the human heart. Nature is ſeldom ſeen by them in her true, or, indeed, in any amiable colours: they are ſoon rendered ſuſpicious and keen-ſighted; and having this clue afforded them, that man is a ſelfiſh animal, they often hit the truth, however obſcured. The young lady, therefore, did not ſucceed in deceiving her royal patroneſs. The Queen knew a convent was not the air her ſpirit choſe to breathe; but ſhe ſuffered her to ſuppoſe her hypocriſy ſucceſsful; for ſhe well knew, that by one means or other ſhe ſhould now obtain the great end ſhe had in view, that of getting rid of a very troubleſome charge, whom her juſtice and humanity would not allow her to caſt off entirely into ruin. She argued, that if the *longing nun* was ſincere, ſhe ſhould be freed from her vexations about her taking the veil; if ſhe was not ſincere, which was the ſubſtantial ground ſhe went on, ſhe certainly feigned becauſe ſhe intended to eſcape. At all events her Majeſty knew ſhe could never remain where ſhe was; and ſatisfied with this perſuaſion, ſhe accepted all her expreſſions of gratitude and joy, as if gratitude and joy had in reality dictated them.

CHAP. VIII.

BUT no ſooner had our heroine quitted the regal apartment, than ſhe laid her plan for avoiding the deteſtable joys preparing for her. Colonel Fliders was then about the Court, and was thought to be ſeriouſly paying his addreſſing to the lady who had betrayed the Queen's intentions. He had formerly expreſſed ſomething like attachment to our religious ſiſter, but intimidated by her coquetry, he had ſoon deſiſted. She now held out a bait to recover him: he was flattered by the teſtimony this bore to his attractions: his *penchant* for her rival abated when he ſaw her in diſgrace with the Queen, and in a ſhort time he was on the point of declaring his change of ſentiments; but the whiſpering dæmon in the perſon of his former favourite, again diſcouraged him, by informing him of the Queen's intentions with regard to his new miſtreſs.

This obſtacle ſhe had addreſs enough to turn to her own advantage. She avowed to him her ſituation; ſhe declared her reluctance to the life ſhe was called to, and ſhe completed her conqueſt by entreating her wavering lover to put it out of the Queen's power to immure her, by immediately marrying her. The dread of offending majeſty made him ſtill heſitate; but female perſuaſives were ſoon victorious: ſhe pledged herſelf by all that was ſacred for his ſecurity and the Queen's approbation: they fled together and were ſoon united.

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My reader will aſk, did ſhe believe the Queen would indeed pardon ſuch conduct? Was ſhe herſelf now a dupe or duping another? I anſwer, ſhe was at the time fully ſatisfied that ſhe entirely forfeited the favour that had nouriſhed her; but any thing was better than a monaſtery, and ſhe felt perfectly happy in eſcaping it.

But if ſhe could have repented ſhe had ſoon cauſe for it. The Queen ſecretly rejoiced in what ſhe outwardly made a ſhew of reſenting; but her real ſentiments ſhe thought good to keep to herſelf. She, therefore, prevailed with the King to deprive Colonel Fliders of all his poſts and emoluments; and the young couple were forced to ſhelter themſelves in Vienna.

Here, after undergoing a variety of hardſhips which the lady's temper did not much contribute to lighten, the Colonel, through the medium of friends, obtained an introduction at his own Court: an employment was given him ſuitable to his talents, affording him a competent income, and from this time their diſtreſſes ſubſided.

The ſole iſſue of this marriage was Colonel Luſinguen, whom I a few pages ago introduced to my reader. Why his name was not that of his father, let me at preſent be excuſed from explaining.

Colonel Fliders died when his ſon was under ten years of age. His mother, ardently doting on him, exerted herſelf in every way to promote his intereſts, which depended almoſt entirely on the Court. What his father could bequeath him ſhe knew was very inſufficient, not only to her ſatisfaction, but to his needs; yet, as ſhe was well aware of the importance money communicates, ſhe brought him up with the idea that he was to poſſeſs great wealth, and had art enough to make this generally believed.

To

To how many difficulties does fraud expoſe thoſe who practiſe it! Once aſſumed it muſt be kept up. Let circumſtances, let diſpoſitions, or tempers, be what they will, when we have begun in deceit, we muſt ſplaſh through or render ourſelves, at leaſt in our own eyes, contemptible. The ſhifts Madame Fliders was put to, to maintain the falſity ſhe ſet out with in the character of a widow, are not to be recounted: ſhe dared not apply at Court for a penſion, which ſhe might have obtained, leſt ſhe ſhould betray her real ſituation, and more than once ſhe ſaw the folly of her conduct; but her pride would not ſuffer her to recede, and ſhe hourly plunged deeper, decreaſing what her huſband had left her, and involving herſelf to the utter deſtruction of all ſhe or her ſon could poſſeſs.

Their difficulties were, however in time diminiſhed. Young Fliders grew up, all a more judicious parent could have wiſhed him. He was early diſtingu ſhed and promoted in the army; rank and income were ſecured for him, and his doting mother had now no important purpoſe to effect, but that of marrying him into a family from whom he might derive that more permanent wealth which ſhe knew he wanted, but he ſuppoſed himſelf entitled to by his father's will when when he reached the age of twenty-three, of which he now wanted five years.

Madame could do nothing but by ſtratagem, and to be ſure the buſineſs of marrying her ſon to her ſatisfaction under ſuch circumſtances, that is to ſay, without betraying the family poverty, did require more than common *fineſſe*. Accordingly, ſhe began to look round with the keeneſt circumſpection, and from amongſt her caſual acquaintance, ſhe ſelected the family of the Secretary Kluber,

Kluber, as worthy the honour of her alliance, or rather ſuited to their views.

The Secretary was a man reputed immenſely rich, well ſkilled in the ways of a court, in which he had been from his earlieſt infancy educated, and on account of his political talents highly eſteemed and frequently reſorted to by his ſovereign. A marriage therefore with his houſe was likely to be productive of endleſs advantages, and at preſent afforded a proſpect ſufficient to gratify more than moderate pride or covetouſneſs. He was a widower with two beautiful daughters, on whom he had, in compliance with the advice of his friends, laviſhed every expence the times admitted, and to whoſe praiſe it was ſaid, that even the negligent indulgence their father treated them with, had not been able to injure the moſt amiable diſpoſitions with which Providence had endowed them.

It was on the youngeſt of theſe ladies that Madame Fliders fixed her eyes for her daughter-in-law. The elder, then eighteen years of age, was known to have already diſpoſed of her affections. Her ſiſter, two years younger, and equally attractive, was believed unengaged, and Madame loſt no time when her plan was formed, in ingratiating herſelf with her.

The heart of a young perſon muſt be morally and eſſentially bad, if it is not eaſily won by kindneſs. Before the chill hand of caution has impreſſed it with its iron fingers, it is warm, tender, and plaſtic, dilating at the touch of benevolence, and expanding to receive every ſentiment of love or friendſhip. Such was the heart of Maria Kluber; and Madame Fliders found not only the young ladies, but their father ſo well diſpoſed to a treaty, at leaſt of *amity*, that they were ſoon inſeparable friends. But ſtill, however well-diſpoſed all parties were, caution was as neceſſary as ever;

ever; for Madame well knew great part of the Secretary's regard was attached to her ſuppoſed wealth, and that whenever ſhe revealed the true ſtate of her finances, or developed the obliquity of her conduct, he and every prudent father muſt ſhrink from a match with her ſon.

Relying on this unbounded fondneſs for his daughters, Madame's crooked prudence ſuggeſted it to her as the beſt method of carrying her point, to engage the affections of the young people; if ſhe ſucceeded in that, to connive at a private marriage, and afterwards to put all her addreſs in practice to reconcile the father to what would be then irremediable.

It was a bold and dangerous project, nether becoming her character as a woman of honour, nor at all ſuiting with the duties of a mother; but an infringement of juſtice was no new miſtake in the deportment of her we are ſpeaking of. If ſhe did not as ſhe *would* be done by, ſhe did as ſhe believed ſhe *ſhould be* done by, that is to ſay, ſhe ſuppoſed all people actuated by the ſame ſelfiſh views, and that if ſhe had eſcaped deceit, it was attributable to her own prudence and ſagacity alone.

Hypocriſy had been never more neceſſary in carrying her through the world than it was now: but it was no difficult *virtue* for her to practiſe. Sincerity would have been more painful to her nature; for ſo ſkilled was ſhe in the contrary habit, that ſhe had nearly loſt the power of being ingenuous.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE next ſtep Colonel Flider's relict took towards diſcharging the duty of ſettling her ſon in the world advantageouſly, was to invite the Secretary Kluber's daughters to ſpend a few weeks with her, the Captain being at the time from home. When ſhe requeſted this indulgence of their father, ſhe followed her petition with an obſervation, that ſhe had purpoſely poſtponed this pleaſure till her ſon was gone away, as ſhe could not be certain their reſidence together might be perfectly agreeable to all parties, concluding her well-framed ſpeech, which was intended to ſound the old man (and by the way did not ſucceed) with a remark that thoſe parents were, in her opinion, inexcuſable who did or allowed aught in prejudice of the right of another perſon ſtanding in the ſame relation. She in the end made ſuch good uſe of her faculty of elocution, that the Secretary, who was naturally pretty wary, determined within himſelf that Madame Fliders was a very prudent woman, very fit to eaſe him of ſome of the trouble he found in bringing up two handſome daughters without a mother, and that they ſhould be allowed to make her the viſit ſhe wiſhed for. On the part of the young ladies it was equally agreeable: their father had adopted the ſummary mode of nearly total confinement of them, becauſe he was ignorant of the means of introducing them to the world, and had little leiſure to beſtow on them; and in Madame Fliders they had every reaſon to believe they ſhould find the friend they ſtood in need of.

Matte

Matters being ſoon adjuſted, they became inmates of Madame Fliders's houſe, about twenty miles out of Vienna. She in a few days perceived that the melancholy of love hung cloſe about the heart of her elder gueſt: ſhe tenderly inquired into the ſtate of her hopes and wiſhes, and was well-diſpoſed to have done any thing that could have contributed to her relief; but finding that the young lady had beſtowed her affections where there was little hope of her father's approbation; and prudently conſidering that to indulge the daughter would not in the end turn out half ſo profitable as not offending the father, ſhe ſtopped ſhort in her charitable intentions, and the young lady was diſappointed of her aid or interceſſion. Profeſſing herſelf a votary of immoveable integrity, ſhe, in their converſation on this ſubject, uniformly preached the regard due to parental authority. By ſuch means ſhe did not ſo happily ſucceed in attaching the elder ſiſter to her; but this was a matter comparatively trifling, becauſe, however well ſhe might have ſucceeded for the young lady, it was not clear that her own intereſts would have been at all forwarded by her aſſiduity.

The love-ſick fair one ſoon perceived that nothing was to be extracted from the compaſſion of her hoſteſs, and that her reſidence with her rather increaſed than diminiſhed her malady, as it entirely deprived her of the means of ſeeing or correſponding with the object of her affections, and her paſſion was too deeply rooted to find relief in abſence. She, therefore, in a ſhort time made an excuſe to get recalled to Vienna, and her father, who had ſoon felt uneaſy without his girls, very readily agreed to her return and her ſiſter's farther ſtay.

This was juſt what Madame Fliders could have wiſhed: her uneaſy gueſt ſhe had for ſome time found

found only an impediment, and ſcarcely had ſhe reached home before the impatient mother began to put in practice means more directly pointed to the purpoſe ſhe was aiming at.

She began by talking to Maria of the various excellencies of her ſon, ſhe ſhewed her his letters, which ever breathed a ſpirit of tenderneſs to his parent and concern for her well-being that ſhe to whom they were addreſſed well knew muſt operate on Maria's amiable ſenſibility. The young lady had not long become thus ideally acquainted with Captain Fliders, before ſhe expreſſed a great curioſity to ſee him, and unreſervedly (for ſhe had neither natural nor acquired deceit) wiſhed any accident might occaſion his coming home while ſhe remained where ſhe was. Madame's integrity fired at this proof of her partial ſucceſs, ſhe aſſured Maria Kluber that her wiſhes were vain, and that ſhould they even in any meaſure be brought within the reach of poſſibility, ſhe herſelf would take care to diſappoint them. Maria thought, and, therefore ſaid, that this was cruel. Madame, in all the ſtiffneſs of maternal prudence and inflexible honour, replied :

" My dear Maria, I hope the pleaſure I enjoy " in your company is ſufficiently apparent to con- " vince you I love you very ſincerely : it is that " ſincere love for you which prompts me to ſay " what you think unkind. It is a mother's pride " to talk of a darling ſon: it is a doting infirmity " which precedes thoſe of age ; and of ſuch a " ſon as mine the world muſt acknowledge I can- " not ſay too much. But fond as I am of him " and of you, and delighted as I ſhould be to at- " tach you to me for ever, his ſeeing you with " partial eyes, or your fixing your affections on " him is a misfortune I pray Heaven daily to " avert. My ſon ſhall never marry into a family

" where

" where every member is not proud to receive
" him. I do not know that this would be the caſe
" with your father. I have reaſon to ſuppoſe it
" might not, and on this account I think it better
" to turn my views for Caſimir to thoſe families
" who have already profeſſed their wiſhes for an
" alliance with mine. Do not imagine, my
" dear Maria, that this indifference proceeds
" from any want of attachment to you. I ſee
" your merits and attractions in the moſt favour-
" able light, and could readily ſo far betray my
" ſon's intereſts as to overlook very prominent
" diſadvantages, becauſe I am certain that what
" he gave up either in wealth or rank, would be
" abundantly made up to him in domeſtic happi-
" neſs with you: but this muſt not be thought on
" —I, therefore, warn you, Maria, to look well
" to your heart; for ſhould Caſimir accidentally
" come hither, which I have no reaſon to fear, I
" would not riſk the conſequence of his once ſee-
" ing you—his heart is, I aſſure you, not impene-
" trable: I have not been able to forbear recom-
" mending you in my letters to him. I wiſh to
" procure his friendſhip for you and your eſteem
" for him; but that is the boundary I preſcribe
" myſelf, and will not permit either of you to
" paſs."

The complacence of an ingenuous mind, while commendation is beſtowing on it—gratitude for Madame Flider's expreſſions of affection, and, perhaps, ſome trifling emotions at hearing the Captain had been impreſſed in her favour, threw over the animated, yet modeſt countenance of Maria Kluber, ſuch a ſuffuſion, as made the preaching mother ſecretly wiſh her ſon there to witneſs it. It ſerved as conviction, that ſo far ſhe had not miſtaken the road to ſucceſs, and ſhe immediately reſolved on a yet bolder ſtep, that of contriving

triving an interview between the young people. A little dexterity was again neceſſary: the effect was to be produced, the cauſe concealed—the puppet was to be put in motion, but woe to the machiniſt if the conducting wire was for a moment viſible.

Caution, ſuch as that ſhe practiſed, would have been unneceſſary with moſt young women; but Madame had early in her acquaintance with Maria, diſcovered that ſhe was not only extremely attached by duty and affection to her father, but that ſhe had a generous ſpirit which would reſent and repel impoſition as ſoon as perceived. This, while it increaſed her difficulties, encouraged her perſeverance. She was not unprincipled enough not to love virture in another; and her endeavours were greatly ſtimulated by the certainty that the young lady, individually conſidered was well worthy of Captain Fliders.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

IT coſt our careful mother ſome ſleepleſs nights to contrive a means of recalling her ſon without exciting ſuſpicion in him or any other of the parties. She knew him too well to hope for his concurrence in any meaſure founded on diſhoneſt ſtratagem, or to believe that the promotion of his intereſts would at all rivet his affections. If a match with the Kluber family was to be brought about, he muſt voluntarily, or rather involuntarily fall in love with Maria. Of this ſhe entertained no doubt could ſhe but bring them together; to bring them together was, therefore, the *ultimatum* of her preſent ſchemes.

No leſs troubleſome method offering, ſhe at laſt bethought herſelf of a very childiſh one, though far from contemptible. It was to feign ſickneſs, which ſhe did ſo completely, as to alarm not only Maria's tenderneſs, but the fears of all her own ſervants. She obſtinately, but prudently refuſed all medical aid; ſhe expreſſed herſelf perfectly reſigned to her fate, even if this was a ſummons for her to a better world; ſhe had no anxiety but for her dear gueſt, nor any wiſh but that ſhe could once more have ſeen her dear Caſimir.

"Shall I write to Captain Fliders?" ſaid the weeping Maria, forgetting all but her friend's danger and deſire; "Surely he could get leave "of abſence on ſuch an occaſion."

"No,

"No, no," replied Madame, "Heaven ſtill "ſpare me the perfect uſe of my reaſon: I know "that I muſt part with one of you; for even the "hand of death ſhall not ſhake my integrity to "your father. It would be ſtill more grievous to "part from my dear Maria, even for an hour, "than to forego the ſight of my ſon. I charge "you, therefore, not to let him hear of my ſick-"neſs or death till your father has taken you away, "which you muſt deſire him to do as ſoon as you "perceive what muſt in a few hours be evident, "that your kind ſolicitude can be of no farther "avail to me."

Screams and the writhings of agony followed this affectionate admonition, while Maria, ſobbing and fainting, became a much fitter object for compaſſion.

Delirium ſucceeded, or ſeemed to ſucceed the effort Madame had made in her injunction—ſhe raved for Caſimir, and to ſo good purpoſe, that one of her attendants, not in the ſecret, without communicating her intention to any one, ſent an expreſs to the Captain, informing him of his mother's ſituation. When next ſhe uttered his name, this careful ſervant tried to ſoothe her by aſſuring her he was ſent for and would probably arrive in a few days. Madame was inſtatly rouſed to her her perfect ſenſes: ſhe angrily inquired by whoſe authority this was done, and hearing that her informant had done it of her own accord, ſhe profeſſed herſelf always diſpoſed to accept the well-meant intentions of thoſe about her; and her charity overcame her reſentment.

It was now no longer a time to be ſick; Madame had too much on her thoughts and hands to attend much to herſelf; ſhe conſequently mended rapidly; but leſt this ſudden recovery might be

matter

matter of ſurpriſe. She inſtructed the ſervant who had proved ſo uſeful, to believe that her reſtoration was entirely effected by the proſpect of ſeeing her ſon, and ſhe perſuaded the unſuſpecting Maria, that Heaven had worked little ſhort of a miracle in her favour.

Still, however, there was danger; for ſhould it reach the ears of Maria that Captain Fliders was coming home, ſhe could make no pretence, conſiſtent with her declaration, for keeping her; and the end would be entirely fruſtrated. She hardly dared truſt the fidelity of domeſtics, yet ſhe was compelled to enjoin them on no conſideration to mention the probability of the Captain's return. For this command ſhe gave as a reaſon a whimſical wiſh to introduce him to her gueſt as only a caſual acquaintance.

Madame Fliders had herſelf an admirable faculty of keeping a ſecret; but doubtiug whether any one elſe poſſeſſed the accompliſhment in as full perfection, ſhe was uneaſy while relying on the ſilence of others. A week or ten days muſt elapſe before her anxiety could end; and to abridge this time of torment ſhe propoſed removing with Maria, oſtenſibly for change of air, to the houſe of a friend a few leagues off her own: there, as ſhe reſolved on taking no ſervant, the ſecret would be ſafe.

She was preparing to put this ſcheme immediately in practice, when an accident intervened that almoſt defeated all her plans. The anxiety and fatigue Maria underwent while ſhe believed herſelf in danger of loſing her affectionate patroneſs, threw her into a violent fever, and for ſome days her life was deſpaired of. The common practice on ſuch an occaſion would have been to inform her farher of her ſituation; but, perhaps, as the time of Captain Flider's return was not to be predicted, an aukward rencontre might enſue if the

the Secretary, as was moſt probable, ſhould come over to ſee his child. Her illneſs was conſequently, but we muſt ſuppoſe out of tender regard to his feelings, kept from his knowledge.

CHAP. XI.

THE young lady's fever took a favourable turn; and ſhe was recovering a ſmall degree of ſtrength when Captain Fliders arrived, in all the hurry and dread of an affectionate ſon, who expected to be told on his entrance that his coming was now too late.

His joy was proportioned to his fears, when he found his mother not only out of danger but in perfect health. She received him alone, and having previouſly ſtudied the new part ſhe had now to perform, ſhe told him in general that Maria Kluber was but juſt getting through a very dangerous illneſs ſhe had contracted in her ſolicitous attendance on her. A hint of this kind ſhe knew would go farther with Caſimir than a laboured oration in Maria's praiſe: he caught at it, and earneſtly begged permiſſion to ſee her.

This requeſt his mother was not at all diſpoſed to refuſe. No farther caution was neceſſary with regard to her ſon; but Maria ſtill called on her warineſs. To introduce the Captain to her in any way would be an infringement of her own laws, yet now it muſt be done, and, therefore, all that remained

remained for her was to gloſs it over with the appearance of chance and neceſſity.

From this interview with her beloved ſon Madame went to the convaleſcent's chamber, and having dreſſed her countenance with the evidences of ſurpriſe and joy, veiled by a ſtudied deſire to appear at eaſe and unconcerned ſhe tenderly inquired what progreſs Maria was making towards health, and ſeated herſelf by her, as if diſpoſed to remain with her. But ſhe was too purpoſely *diſtrait*, too fidgetty, and too little like herſelf to have her emotions paſſed over or miſtaken. Maria's curioſity and concern were at once awakened. Madame at firſt declined gratifying her, till the amiable girl reminding her that even a ſmall degree of mental uneaſineſs might reduce her again to the danger ſhe was ſcarcely freed from, her conſiderate friend ſeemed over-powered by her argument, and expreſſing the moſt diſintereſted ſorrow told her, that one of her ſervants had privately informed Caſimir of her illneſs, and that he was actually arrived.

The pallidneſs of ſickneſs could not overcome the crimſon that glowed in Maria's cheeks at hearing this news. She, who till now had been ſo curious to ſee Captain Fliders, was at this inſtance over-awed by the idea of his preſence, and caſt down her eyes in ſilence. Madame followed her intelligence by reporting her ſon's wiſh perſonally to thank her for her extreme attention to his mother, and to condole with her on its conſequences. Maria could not now ſay ſhe ſhould be happy to receive his viſit, and ſhe ſuffered Madame to go on in the uſual ſtrain, expreſſing her fears and perplexities.

At length, a little diſappointed by what if ſhe had underſtood it ſhould have encouraged her, ſhe

was

was forced to come forwarder than she had designed. She professed herself embarrassed between her inclination to oblige her son, and her punctiliousness with regard to her friend, observed how much easier those people passed through the world who had none of her scruples; and seemed half inclined rather to risk offending Captain Fliders than indulging him.

Maria was still silent—Madame walked about in real perplexity, for she had hoped the young lady would have been earnest for the interview, and intended to have sheltered herself under the plausible excuse of unwillingness to thwart one whose health was at this juncture so delicately balanced. Perceiving at last that some one must speak, and that her young friend either could not or would not, she drew a chair close to her, and having in a preparatory speech descanted on her own scrupulous integrity and her difficulties in discharging opposite duties, she proposed to Maria her receiving Captain Fliders, if it was agreeable to her, and her returning in a few days to Vienna. There, as being in her father's house, she observed, she would be safe even from censure, and she trusted that by this sacrifice she should evince herself worthy of the trust the Secretary had reposed in her. Her stay at Vienna, she added, needed not to exceed Captain Flider's at home: change of air and scene might probably facilitate her recovery, and was at all events to be sought.

The young lady, remitting every thing to Madame's discretion, it was agreed that on the following day a letter should be written to her father, to the purport proposed; and the crafty mother, impatient for the collision of two minds she had endeavoured to render completely inflammable, returned to her son, and presently introduced him to her

her *elève*, in whoſe countenance at the inſtant was concentrated all the beauty that a mind, ingenuous yet timid, innocent yet awed, and pleaſed yet diſtreſſed, could add to regularity of features, and a complexion rendered exquiſitely delicate by recent ſickneſs.

Under circumſtances ſo intereſting, a more homely perſon might have attracted the regard of one who had much of the milk of human kindneſs in his veins.

What then was to be expected when ſo much that was lovely was preſented to the eyes of Caſimir, doubly recommended by its own excellence, and by veneration for the virtues ſhe ſuffered by? He would have expreſſed by words the gratitude of a ſon for a parent's life preſerved; but words could find but imperfect utterance; they trembled on his lips; they diſſolved in his eyes; and the big tear, for a moment in ſuſpenſe, rolled down in ſilent eloquence.

Madame was now all vivacity.—Maria ſtrove to converſe at eaſe, and the Captain endeavoured to be rational. The two latter ſucceeded not at all. Madame enjoyed their diſtreſs, and was confirmed in the hopes ſhe had formed when ſhe made the ſpecious propoſition of Maria's returning home, that the miſchief would be done before her prudence or integrity would be impeached.

The letter to the Secretary announcing his daughter's intended return was to be written the next day. After an evening's converſation with Captain Fliders, Maria did not feel ſo ready to act as his mother had planned. She, however, kept her thoughts to herſelf; and though her pillow was witneſs that ſhe did not once cloſe her eyes all the enſuing night, ſhe had too much of the dignity of female modeſty about her to hint her reluctance.

When

When the family met in the morning, this departure was introduced as a ſubject of converſation by Madame herſelf. Her ſon expreſſed his genuine concern that he ſhould for ſo ſhort a time of his ſhort viſit enjoy Maria's company. She bowed in ſilence. Madame began reckoning on her fingers how long it would be before her letter could reach Vienna, how long before her father could ſend for her, and how long ſhe muſt be on the road, and then pretending to diſcover that Maria ſeemed not quite ſo well as ſhe had been the preceding day, ſhe threw out ſome doubts whether it were not too early for her to undertake even a ſhort journey.

Here again ſhe was a little balked; for though the Captain joined her in adviſing their young friend to be cautious in exerting her ſtrength, ſhe, inſtead of profeſſing her uſual acquieſcence and ſubmiſſion, expreſſed a ſtrong deſire to go home.

Let it not be inferred from this change in Maria's ſentiments, that ſhe was diſpleaſed with Captain Fliders or indifferent to him; on the contrary, he had fully anſwered her expectations, and made good all his mother had promiſed ſhe would find in him. When Maria expreſſed curioſity to ſee him, ſhe was not at all aware that an acquaintance with him could produce any thing that was not extremely pleaſant to her mind: ſhe had heard that he was elegant and accompliſhed, that he could inform and amuſe her, that he was of a temper that would join in promoting all the various purſuits ſhe delighted in, that ſhe would admire the acquirements of his head, and love the philanthropic virtues of his heart. But that this admiration or this love would bring with them aught that could reſtrain, oppreſs, or agitate her, that ſhe ſhould feel what ſhe wiſhed to conceal even from herſelf, or that ſhe ſhould be made unhappy by this completion of her happineſs, ſhe had not once ſuſpected. Yet ſo it was:

Captain

Captain Fliders's preſence, inſtead of cheering her, entirely ſuppreſſed her vivacity: ſhe felt awed and embarraſſed when with him; ſhe was ſtill leſs at eaſe when he was abſent.

Not having yet attained that artificial taſte that renders pain pleaſing, ſhe was deſirous of removing from the object of her uneaſineſs. That he it was who diſtreſſed her ſhe could infer from her own ſenſations, and from reflecting that till he came, all was peace and tranquillity within her breaſt. Steadier in her purpoſe than could be expected from her years, ſhe, therefore, reſiſted all Madame's admonitions, and herſelf wrote by the firſt poſt to her father, acquainting him with her narrow eſcape from the grave, and her wiſh to try change of air by returning home for a ſhort time.

This done, ſhe felt an imaginary comfort in the idea that ſhe had ſecured herſelf a retreat; and now liſtening with leſs aſperity to the whiſpers of her heart, ſhe thought ſhe might indulge more at liberty in the pleaſures of her ſituation, without thoſe uneaſy ſenſations that had for ſome hours haunted her. The atmoſphere ſhe breathed was gratifying to the ſenſes; and if it was not as ſalubrious as could be wiſhed, ſhe ſatisfied herſelf by conſidering ſhe ſhould ſoon quit it, and, therefore, proved, by the logic of falſe reaſoning, that ſhe might without much injury inhale it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

BUT her letter could not have reached Vienna before another revolution was brought about in Maria's opinions. The reſtraint of novel acquaintance with Captain Fliders had preſently worn off: his attentions encouraged her; ſhe fancied ſhe ſuffered leſs uneaſineſs while in his company than when diſtant from him, and ſhe drank ſuch large draughts of the delicious poiſon prepared for her, that ſhe felt no longer any hankering after home: ſhe ſaw neither prudence nor relief in foregoing what gratified her; and ſhe wiſhed ſincerely, but ſecretly, that ſhe had liſtened to Madame's advice before it was too late.

The day of recall approached with winged feet Melancholy began to invade the fair one's mind and was ſoon predominant when ſhe perceived it in the countenance of Captain Fliders. Yet now again native dignity came to her aid: ſhe ſtrove with all her might to keep the dominion of herſelf, and to diſguiſe the weak ſtate of all that fortified her mind. Again ſhe began to long for her departure; but the ſimple queſtion, ſhall I be happier when I am gone? ever ſtarting itſelf in oppoſition to her wiſh, convinced her that ſhe was yet to ſeek what would contribute to her eaſe.

How fared the Captain all this while? my reader will naturally aſk. To the full as ill as poor Maria, excepting that his mind had not a body, debilitated

debilitated by ſickneſs to work on: his paſſions were naturally ſtrong, and now they were aided by having in his view the object that inflamed them, and by the gentle *aura* with which his mother never failed to keep them alive. On him ſhe could work in far greater ſecurity than on Maria: ſhe had no fear of drawing down reſentment on herſelf, while ſhe ſeemed anxious only for his happineſs—it was his *happineſs* ſhe was forced to profeſs herſelf intereſted for: ſhe had once ventured to hint the *advantage* of ſuch an alliance, but ſoon found it prudent to forego that argument.

Yet ſhe had difficulties to ſtep over in this quarter. Caſimir poſſeſſed in reality the high ſenſe of honour his mother wore only externally. Attached as he felt himſelf to Maria, he could not but look forward to what was the *ultimatum* of his wiſhes—her hand: but to obtain it without the ſanction of her father would be, in his preſent judgment, almoſt equivalent to miſſing it. In the warm affection of the heart none ſurpaſſed Caſimir, but ſuch as degraded themſelves by ſacrificing their integrity to their paſſions.

Conceiving that a parent's right over the inclination of a child extends no farther than a negative, he ſaw no impropriety or breach of duty in making the beſt uſe of the flying moments by avowing his infant paſſion for her, and requeſting her permiſſion to viſit her at her father's. Before he ventured on this ſtep, which timid love made formidable even to a ſoldier and to Caſimir, he reſolved to conſult his mother, not that he doubted her ready acquieſcence, but becauſe he was as yet in ignorance what pretenſions he had to ſupport him in his application.

Having procured a *tête-à-tête* conference with her, and received her concurrence in his views, he proceeded to requeſt a categorical anſwer to this

this plain queſtion—"What, when I am out of "my minority, ſhall I have to offer Secretary "Kluber as a proviſion for his daughter?"—Madame Fliders was for a moment at a loſs: ſhe had not expected her ſon to liſten to any other ſuggeſtions than thoſe of paſſion for Maria. Cunning and circumvention ſhe was in general proof againſt, but plain prudence could at any time throw her off her guard.

Heſitation ſhe conſidered as ruin. She, therefore, as ſteadily as ſhe could, declared the impoſſibility of giving an immediate anſwer to ſuch a query. It required the examination and ſettlement of accounts—it muſt be a work of ſome time; but ſhe would ſet about it immediately. She hoped, without this ſatisfaction he would not doubt his having an ample fortune. It had been her inceſſant ſtudy, while his father lived, to prevent a diminution of their property, and ſince his death ſhe had been ſedulous in the improvement of it. She had no reluctance to ſubmitting her accounts to his or any one's inſpection; but as ſhe ſuffered no one elſe to interfere with them, they could not be made out in a moment. Some negociations, on which a part of her improvements depended, muſt remain in ſuſpenſe about a month longer, as the parties concerned in them were then at a great diſtance; but if he would have patience till the expiration of that ſhort period, ſhe would then give him the very reaſonable ſatisfaction he deſired.

It was on the certainty alone that Caſimir would *not* have patience, that his mother depended for ſucceſs in miſleading him. He had never entertained a ſuſpicion of her probity, and at this juncture he was not at all diſpoſed to create difficulties. A poſitive aſſurance from Madame, that though ſhe could not give him the detail, ſhe knew

the groſs of his wealth was ſufficient to juſtify him, was as much as he wiſhed for, and he flew from her to Maria, whom he feared the enſuing day might ſnatch from him for ever if he neglected this opportunity.

He found her in a right frame of mind for the reception of his viſit. She was ſitting alone wholly unemployed, ruminating on the approaching period of her enjoyments. Too diffident to ſuppoſe Captain Fliders entertained any partiality for her, ſhe was repeating to herſelf—*I ſhall never ſee him again—he will forget me; but I ſhall ever remember and love him.* Starting tears proved that the ſentiment ſprung from her heart. Hearing the door open, ſhe haſtily wiped them away, for (why ſhe did not know) ſhe was unwilling Caſimir ſhould be a witneſs of her weakneſs.

He began, heſitating and faultering, by expreſſing his concern that they were ſo ſoon to part. A natural reluctance to give pain to another prompted her to have ſaid—It will be but for a ſhort time—but ſhe remembered that return as ſoon as ſhe could, he muſt be gone. It was a recollection unfortunate for her feelings: and ſhe bit her lips and again repreſſed her tears in ſilence.

CHAP. XIII.

CASIMIR ſoon found the buſineſs on which he came the moſt difficult to mention. He dared not preſume even to the emotion he witneſſed. On the contrary, he was ſorry he ſaid a word that affected her. The idea of parting from his mother he knew was grating to the mind of Maria, and to relieve her from it, he turned the converſation on indifferent, and now very inſipid ſubjects.

But on no ſubject could Maria converſe with any portion of her wanted eaſe. She dreaded betraying herſelf by her voice, and ſtill more by her eyes; and ſuch was her uneaſineſs, that ſhe would gladly have made an excuſe to get away, but none preſented itſelf, and ſhe fancied it impoſſible even to riſe, without Captain Fliders's immediately perceiving her diſtreſs.

From an embarraſſment that every moment was encreaſing, ſhe was relieved by the entry of a ſervant with a letter. Fearful as ſhe was that it was the ſummons ſhe had courted but now dreaded, ſhe yet received it gladly; for ſhe was reduced to a ſtate compared with which the worſt ſhe had hitherto apprehended was pleaſure. She eagerly ſnatched the letter, ſaw the ſuperſcription was her ſiſter's, and was in the act of breaking the ſeal, when Caſimir, ſpringing from the place where he had ſtood motionleſs, prevented her opening it. She wondered, but ſhe could not be angry; he entreated her to hear him before ſhe was biaſſed by the contents of that letter, and his electrical courage

riſing with his danger, ſhe in an inſtant knew from the impetuous language of paſſion, what it had coſt him, hours and days to expreſs in ſtudied ſentences.

Agitated to a degree that made him almoſt repent what he had done, and in a manner that alarmed him too much to encourage him, ſhe could make no return but by breaking through the reſtraint ſhe had impoſed on her tears. They flowed moſt copiouſly, and allowed her only to ſay, "In "pity leave me, and I will ſee you again in an "hour."

He obeyed her in ſilent ſubmiſſion; returned to his mother more frighted than cheered, and begged her inſtantly to try to repair the miſchief he had done. To his terrified imagination nothing preſented itſelf but Maria's relapſing into her fever, and probably dying in conſequence of his too early and ill-conducted application.

Madame immediately ſought the young lady, and too experienced to augur any fatal conſequences from her perturbed ſpirits, ſhe was delighted with the viſible effects of her ſon's eloquence. She poſſeſſed enough of the talent of oratory herſelf, to charm down Maria's heaving boſom and to dry her eyes, and in a quarter of the time ſhe had wiſhed for, the ingenuous girl was tolerably herſelf.

To a woman of Madame's addreſs, it was no Herculean labour to draw from her gueſt the information ſhe wanted. Promiſes of ſecrecy ſhe had always in abundance to ſpare, and when Maria found that ſhe was honoured, as ſhe eſteemed herſelf, by her wiſhes for Captain Fliders's ſucceſs, gratitude for her good opinion took from her even the power of diſſembling for a moment.

Had ſhe enjoined Caſimir a longer abſence, he would have obeyed her at the expence of the little that remained of his peace; but the prohibition,

tion, conſtrued ever ſo ſtrictly, could not extend to keeping him in ignorance how ſhe feared. The meſſage was too formal to ſend by a ſervant; he, therefore, came to the room were ſhe was, knocked ſmartly at the door, and on the outſide requeſted to ſpeak with his mother.

She roſe and went to him, and holding the door in her hand, gave him the ſatisfaction he aſked, of knowing Maria was tolerably recovered, artfully expreſſing herſelf in a way that would have miſled a far more thorough-paced worlding than our young friend, into a belief, that ſhe had effectually repreſented her indiſpoſition as entirely unconnected with a converſation too trifling to be attended to. —"Madame is, indeed, my friend," ſaid Maria to herſelf; "how few people would act thus be-"tween me and a ſon! She ſhall have the whole "of my confidence: I will obey her as my mother, "and be guided entirely by her affection."

The Captain lingered at the door, as if a word from her within would have been a ſufficient invitation, and gladly, ſhe *thought*, would ſhe have abridged the period of his exile: but her palpitation returned with the idea of him returning, and ſhe ſuffered his mother to exclude him without an advocate.

Madame reſumed her ſeat, and now directed her endeavours to inſpiring Maria with the higheſt idea of her diſintereſted affection. The Secretary's unbiaſſed content ſhe repreſented as neceſſary, not only to her own *peace*, but to the *honour* of her family. To have recourſe to ſupplication ſhe declared to be what the ſpirit of Caſimir would not brook, and well aware how far timid minds may be awed where they cannot be tempted, ſhe by gentle haughtineſs completed the aſcendancy ſhe had before ſo nearly gained. But not a word did ſhe urge in behalf of her ſon: on the contrary, ſhe

talked as if ſhe had had ſomething higher in view for him, which his preſent attachment thwarted. She profeſſed herſelf inclined to ſacrifice ſome part of his intereſts to his wiſhes, and dwelt particularly on her anxiety to embrace ſo favourable an opportunity of rendering her dear Maria an object of of envy. In ſhort, the hour was not expired before Secretary Kluber's daughter, allied to families of diſtinguiſhed rank and opulence, and herſelf poſſeſſing advantages that gave her pretenſions to any exaltation, conſidered herſelf as a being of an inferior ſpecies, on whom it was the utmoſt *condeſcenſion* in Captain Fliders to have fixed his regard.

The minute deſtined for his re-admiſſion approached, and his mother would have retired, leaving the young lady to act for herſelf; but apprehenſive that her feelings might again deprive her of the power of expreſſing herſelf, ſhe requeſted Madame to be the bearer of this meſſage to Captain Fliders—" That ſhe eſteemed herſelf honoured by " the regard he had profeſſed for her; and now re- " ferred him to her father."

As ſoon as ſhe had thus relieved herſelf and was alone, ſhe fearing grievouſly what ſhe might meet with, opened her ſiſter's letter; but of the drift of it ſhe was yet ignorant, when he, whoſe image had obtruded between her eyes and the paper, entered too precipitately to give her time even to compoſe her looks. He ſaw her, as ſhe was, all gratitude and affection towards him, and tremblingly fearful leſt ſhe ſhould be ſeparated from him.

A long ſpace of time elapſed before either thought of reſorting again to the letter for farther information. At laſt, a ſummons to dinner rouſed their recollection that the were beings of this world. Maria, thinking it a ſhame to pay ſo little attention to her ſiſter, and, perhaps, not caring to confeſs her ignorance ſhould Madame interrogate her,

halted

halted in her way to ſkim its contents, and was ſurpriſed, whether agreeably or not we will not aſk, to find no mention made of her returning home. "Till to-morrow at leaſt, then, I am "ſafe," whiſpered ſhe, as ſhe put the letter in her pocket.

CHAP. XIV.

THE innocent enjoyments of this day exceeded all that her bounding heart had yet experienced. The pleaſures that till now had raiſed her ſpirits or excited her vivacity, appeared childiſh, mean, and contemptible; and ſhe felt moſt truly that ſweets are moſt poignant when daſhed with bitters; for her dread of ſeparation was great enough to have completely dejected her, had it not been interwoven with that ſincere and generous ſpecies of love which forms a bulwark againſt all danger, and a pillow on which the mind repoſes in perfect ſecurity.

But with the next morning's dawn, which one moment's ſleep had not endangered her miſſing, terrors ſo predominant returned, that now ſhe felt only the pain of her affection. It was poſſible that this day would be the laſt of her preſent abode with Caſimir. Gloomy fears hovered around her, and whiſpered that all would not go on as well as ſhe had hoped and Madame had repreſented. She revered her father, and had more than once trembled under his capricious ſeverity. She anticipated

a refuſal of his conſent, and ſunk almoſt to fainting at the ideal misfortune.

The probability that the Secretary might, notwithſtanding the omiſſion in his elder daughter's letter, either fetch or ſend for Maria home on this day, was ſufficient to caſt an immoveable gloom over the minds of Caſimir and Maria. Madame herſelf ſeemed infected with it, and it may be thought reaſonable that ſhe ſhould have ſhared it; but the reader is requeſted to give her credit for diſſimulation, and to believe ſhe was wiſer by many degrees than the young folks.

The day paſſed without the arrival of Secretary Kluber, or any meſſage from Vienna. Maria was in a ſtate of agreeable aſtoniſhment, and Caſimir did not fail to improve the unlooked-for opportunity by all juſtifiable endeavours that could confirm her good opinion of him. The undiſturbed tranquillity they enjoyed produced very different ſenſations in their different minds: he thought, that as to-day ſhe was not ſnatched away, to-morrow alſo ſhe might remain; ſhe was perſuaded, that as to-day ſhe was not fetched, to-morrow ſhe certainly ſhould be.

Madame all this while was playing a deep game; and the cards ſhe held required ſo much of her attention, that the converſation of the young folks was an interruption, and they ſcarcely ſaw her the whole day.—We will not ſlander her ſo, as to ſuppoſe ſhe had any worſe deſign in thus critically withdrawing her reſtraint from her ſon and her protection from her ward.

Why no attention had been yet paid to the letter Maria had written to her father, we have ſaid was no myſtery to Madame; the truth was, ſhe had intercepted it before it left her houſe, fearing, from Maria's conduct, that the intermediate time would not be ſufficient for the execution of her plan.

plan. At preſent, therefore, ſhe had no cauſe to ſuſpect loſing the fiſh ſhe had hooked; and Caſimir having obtained an extenſion of his furlough for a month longer, ſome part of her multifarious care was at an end: but ſtill there remained abundance of employ for her brain, and now ſhe muſt plunge, where ſhe was not ſure ſhe ſhould not ſoon be out of her depth.

Theſe were ſome few of the obſtacles to her ſchemes. She knew her ſon could not eaſily be driven into a clandeſtine amour, that Maria would do nothing without the approbation of her father, and that the ſtraits to which pride and profuſion had driven herſelf, were ſuch as made it equally raſh and fooliſh to hope for the Secretary's countenance. To obviate even theſe impediments required all the talents of a Madame Fliders; but they were ſoon immeaſurably increaſed by the actual arrival of a letter from Vienna, not addreſſed to Maria, but to Madame, in which the Secretary bluntly told her, he had heard her ſon was returned home, and had been ſome time in her houſe; that after the profeſſions ſhe had made, he was aſtoniſhed at her duplicity, and would inſtantly have ſet out to recall his daughter, but that lameneſs confining him, he inſiſted on her immediately reſtoring her to him herſelf.

This letter arriving while ſhe was in the ſame room with the two young people, not all her hypocriſy could diſguiſe her feelings entirely. Rage and diſappointment inſtantly would have ſeated themſelves on her brow—ſhe felt their approach, and to avoid obſervation, prudently retired to ſolitude, where her never-failing promptitude ſoon ſupplied her with the means of turning even this untoward accident to her own advantage.

After ſome hours cogitation, ſhe ſent for her ſon alone, and when he obeyed her ſummons, ſhe

received him holding the letter in her hand, and began the converſation by expreſſing her regret that an injuction to ſecrecy which it carried with it, deprived her of the ſatisfaction of ſhewing it to him, though ſhe was aware the contents of it muſt give pain. By whom it was written ſhe enteated him, not with the authority of a mother, but with the humility of a ſuppliant, not to aſk. She was ſo ſtrictly bound by the ſacred denunciations it contained, in caſe ſhe tranſgreſſed, that more than ſhe voluntarily told him it was vain, and it would be cruel in him to ſeek. But ere ſhe communicated any part of the painful ſecret, ſhe muſt impoſe on him ſhackles nearly ſimilar with thoſe that confined her. He muſt, on the honour of a gentleman and a ſoldier, promiſe that no one living, not even his dear Maria Kluber, ſhould ever be made privy to this affair. Caſimir, impatient and trembling, inſtantly gave her the ſolemn promiſe ſhe required; and ſhe then adverting to her letter, as if ſhe really drew her information from thence, without the leaſt heſitating told him, the Secretary and his daughters were ruined, for the Emperor had required him to reſign his employments; and after a ſtatement of his accounts, had called on him to make good a pecuniary deficiency far exceeding the extent of his poſſeſſions.

Caſimir was aſtoniſhed; but not diſpirited, as a man would have been whoſe heart was divided between beauty and wealth. His wary mother ſaw the impolicy of ſuffering him to pauſe: ſhe followed up her information with a well directed aſſurance, that the honour of the Secretary was not at all impeached by this revolution; that it was, as he knew moſt things of the kind were, the work of a vile cabal, who, moſt probably, would in a few months ſhare the ſame fate; and ſhe kindly removed all his other apprehenſions, by giving him

her word that the misfortune ſhould make no alteration in her diſpoſition towards Maria, whom, ſhe ſaid, compaſſion would now make her conſider entirely as a daughter: and concluding her ſpeech with ſome ſagacious and affectionate obſervations on the non-neceſſity of riches to happineſs, and on the alleviation of her concern which ſhe found in the attachment of two perſons ſhe loved almoſt equally, ſhe fully perſuaded Caſimir to think the opportunity afforded him of proving his love and integrity, atoned for all the ſorrow his ſympathy coſt him.

His prudence was ſo entirely convinced of the propriety of keeping Maria ignorant of this diſaſter, that the ſoldier's oath ſhe had exacted was not neceſſary to her ſecurity. Caſimir went away to ruminate on the beſt method of averting from her he loved, conſequences he dared not think on; and Madame remained alone, contriving how to complete the ruin of the Kluber family; for the elder daughter was on the point of diſpoſing of herſelf in a way that promiſed nothing but miſery, and Maria's proſpect had little but the innate worth of Caſimir to cheer it, as even his mother could nor but be anxious leſt the Secretary, inſtead of the forgiveneſs ſhe had relied on, might not requite her iniquity more equitably by ſetting his face entirely againſt her ſon, and thereby totally impeding his progreſs either to wealth or honour.

A little more reflection pointed this danger ſo ſharply, that it began ſeriouſly to terrify her, and once thoroughly alarmed, her fears were not eaſily huſhed. To ſuch a height did they at laſt predominate, that ſhe reſolved not only to ſtop, but to recede; and ſending again for Caſimir, ſhe bid him cooly conſider the alliance he was about to form, repreſented ſome of the many dangers that might

might reſult from uniting himſelf with a ſinking family; and ſummed up all, by adviſing him as a friend to think no more of Maria Kluber.

It had been poſſible in ſome meaſure to teach Caſimir to love; but the whole world could neither teach or compel him to the contrary. In terms leſsreſpectful and more peremptory than he had ever uſed, or perhaps could have repeated, to his parent, he rejected her advice, and ſwore that not even Maria's being reduced to actual poverty ſhould ever for a moment repel his tendereſt love from her. He contended, that it muſt increaſe with her misfortunes; for as it had its foundation in her own virtues, whatever oppreſſion they met with would attach him cloſer to her. Caſimir was too honeſt to have his meaning doubted; he was too firm ever to be ſhaken from what he thought right; and his mother ſoon perceived, that if even the ruin ſhe had deſcribed had fallen on him in conſequence of his perſiſting, it would not be in her power to ſave him. Once again, therefore, ſhe reſolved to proceed.

CHAP. XV.

IT had been no very difficult taſk to compound ſuch a deceit as ſerved the purpoſe of impoſing on Caſimir; but the far greater part of this troubleſome buſineſs yet lay behind untouched. How was the Secretary to be kept at bay? and what fiction would prevail on Maria to diſpoſe of herſelf without the conſent of her father? There was no time to be loſt, and conſequently there was little leiſure for contrivance; and although Madame Fliders was as expeditious as moſt people in concerting her plans, yet even ſhe muſt now accelerate her uſual pace, or be detected.

The firſt meaſure ſhe took was that of writing, reſpectfully and yet haughtily, to Secretary Kluber; and by what appeared a ſimple ſtatement of facts, ſhe artfully endeavoured not only to reinſtate herſelf in his good opinion, but to improve it. She acknowledged that Captain Fliders had ſuddenly returned home; ſhe gave her recent illneſs as the cauſe, and put to the Secretary's humanity and judgment to decide, whether ſhe could refuſe admiſſion to a ſon who had been driven home by his filial piety, or turn Maria out of her houſe at that juncture becauſe he was arrived. She did not affect to conceal that he was ſtill with her; nor had ſhe wiſhed him gone; for ſhe had been in hourly expectation of the Secretary's ſending for his daughter, as ſhe had requeſted by a letter which ſhe now began to ſuſpect had miſcarried. She was extremely grieved at the little

confidence repoſed in her at a time of life when prudence was almoſt the only mental qualification ſhe could boaſt, and her pride was hurt at the imputation of duplicity. Her recent illneſs made her conducting her young friend to Vienna herſelf impoſſible without the hazard of her life; and if ſuch was the Secretary's opinion of her, it was folly to ſuppoſe he would be ſatisfied with any perſon ſhe ſhould depute in her ſtead: Maria therefore muſt remain with her till he came or ſent for her. In the mean time ſhe could aſſure him, that no vigilance the moſt diſintereſted and moſt anxious friend could exert ſhould be wanting on her part—Captain Fliders was too young to think of fixing his affections; it was what ſhe ſhould for his own ſake earneſtly diſſuade him from. She did not pretend to more than common ſagacity: ſhe warned the Secretary that a mother is eaſily deceived; but as far as ſhe could penetrate into the heart of Caſimir, he appeared to her ſo totally abſorbed by the love of his profeſſion, and to attain high rank in that ſeemed ſo undividedly the object of his attention, that ſhe believed him inſenſible of any other paſſion; and with regard to Maria, ſhe as a mother ſhould, perhaps, be offended with the little regard ſhe beſtowed on her ſon, if it was not the natural reſult of the roughneſs and non-attention his manners and temper had acquired in a camp.

Having peruſed and re-peruſed this important diſpatch, ſcanned and proved it with the utmoſt nicety, Madame was convinced it muſt anſwer the intention. Relieved conſiderably by having thus ſatisfactorily diſcharged this *duty*, ſhe ſent away her letter, and next turned her attacks on Maria.

She went to her in her own apartment unprepared with a ſtory, but truſting to her own fertile genius for an impromptu. She found her walking

backwards

backwards and forwards acroſs the room, her handkerchief, which ſeemed to have been drenched with tears, twiſted into a rope between her hands. The ſwoln veins of her forehead, the inflamed appearance of her eyes, and her pallid lips and complexion, indicated recent affliction, and affliction too near her heart to admit of the interpoſition of diſguiſe. As ſoon as Madame entered, as if ſhe now met the friend on whom her ſorrows could repoſe, ſhe threw her arms round her neck, and again diſſolved into tears. It was in vain to inquire what ſo agitated her—ſhe would have ſpoken, but her lips trembled, too unſteady to be the bearers of a word. She ſhook her head when ſhe found the effort vain, and drawing Madame to a ſeat, ſhe held her hand in ſilent grief.

Aſtoniſhment and concern, but, above all, fear that ſhe had been over-reached, and that Maria was acquainted with her father's real ſentiments, were effectual padlock's on Madame's tongue, till recollecting that the machine ſhe had wound up would go but for a certain number of hours, the dread of loſing time made her again eloquent; and as if wholly a ſtranger to the cauſe of her friend's grief, ſhe requeſted to be made acquainted with her ſorrows. Curioſity and ſelf-intereſt were too prevalent to be longer oppoſed, and ſhe began her interrogatories by—"Have you had a letter from "home? It is no bad news from your father, I hope."

"O no, no," replied the ſobbing Maria; "I have heard nothing from home."

Madame ſilently thanked Heaven for this eſcape, and then with firmer confidence proceeded in her inquiries as to the origin and author of her ſufferings.

"'Tis

"'Tis Caſimir—'tis Captain Fliders," anſwered Maria, burſting into freſh tears as ſhe pronounced his name.

"Caſimir!—Captain Fliders!—My ſon!" repeated Madame. "Sure it cannot be. I will inſtantly go to him—there muſt be ſome miſtake between you."

"O do not go," cried the weeping girl; "hear it rather from me—he will diſguiſe the truth, and win you to his opinion.—We have parted for ever—I will never ſee him again—I will go home—O why did I ever ſee him?"

Madame ſaw no poſſibility of getting at the ſecret, unleſs ſhe firſt ſoothed her who poſſeſſed it. A little addreſs will do much in prevailing where the prepoſſeſſion of confidence and affection has ſmoothed the way. Maria wiped away her tears, and ſtrove to repreſs her ſobs while ſhe told her careful protectreſs, that all her agitation was occaſioned by Captain Fliders's having propoſed, and moſt vehemently urged, an immediate and clandeſtine marriage.

Madame in her heart rejoiced; but putting on a diſtreſſed and penſive countenance, ſhe, as if loſt in thought, ſuffered Maria to proceed in obſerving on the unpardonable breach of honour Caſimir had been guilty of. The logic of upright intentions and an unbiaſſed judgment furniſhed her with a correct ſyllogiſm—they both, ſhe hoped, meant what was right. If their marriage was right, why was it to be concealed, why was it thought of?—All theſe, and a thouſand more queries and caſes of conſcience, had ſhe ſtated them, Madame was in a fit cue to reſolve—ſhe ſaw with joy this arduous buſineſs in a fair train, and conceiving that nothing was wanting to complete it but a *coup de main*, ſhe was not at all diſpoſed to balk it.

it. The only remaining nicety was to do the miſchief and effectually conceal the author.

Caſimir had kept his word moſt punctually. Maria was wholly ignorant of reaſons that actuated him. He had poſitively refuſed to diſcloſe them; and not having his mother's promptitude in invention, he had not ſupplied the deficiency from that ſource, but contented himſelf with endeavouring to perſuade Maria, aſſuring her that, did ſhe know his motives, ſhe muſt approve them, and that a ſhort time would of itſelf juſtify him.

But young as ſhe was, and well as ſhe loved him, the native integrity of her mind had enabled her to act as the moſt experienced and diſintereſted perſon would have done. She had, with all ſeverity her ſpirit could exerciſe, blamed Caſimir for this breach of honour; ſhe had poſitively refuſed to liſten to a repetition of his propoſal, and had diſmiſſed him at the ſame time in deſpair and in admiration of her ſteadineſs.

It had been his mother's reſolution, when ſhe had learnt the cauſe of Maria's perturbation, to have backed her ſon's intereſts, by feigning to explain to her the motives on which he acted, and by manufacturing ſome falſity, which ſhould clear his honour, undermine her firmneſs, and, if poſſible, convince her, in a way ſo oblique that the end ſhe aimed at might not be perceived, that the only means of doing right was what ſhe now rejected. It required ſome ingenuity to have forged a tale that would, even in appearance, anſwer this purpoſe; but Madame ſoon found her pains would be fruitleſs. Maria's judgment was not to be clouded by ſophiſtry, or impoſed on by deceit; ſhe ſeemed equally on her guard againſt the mother, the ſon, and her own heart; and while ſhe avowed ſuch an affection for Captain Fliders, as with almoſt any other woman would have inſured

him

him ſucceſs, ſhe evinced a mind ſo correctly virtuous, and ſo exquiſitely nice in the diſcharge of every claim on her duty, that bold, indeed, muſt he have been who could have ſnatched the hand ſhe ſeemed to offer.

Madame was converted into a mere liſtener. She dared not even ſay a word in behalf of Caſimir. She would ſee him—ſhe would talk to him—ſhe would learn his reaſons—ſhe entreated Maria to ſuſpend her judgment till ſhe knew what they were; and having obtained a promiſe that ſhe would do ſo, ſhe went to her ſon, not on the errand ſhe pretended, but to adviſe him, unleſs he would riſk the ruin of his hopes, and drive Maria from the houſe, to drop the ſubject for the preſent, and endeavour to reinſtate himſelf in her tottering opinion.

CHAP. XVI.

THE hope of ſucceſs by ſome other means, not the conviction that he was at all wrong in the object he aimed at, induced Captain Fliders to liſten to his mother's advice, to promiſe he would change his meaſures, and to behave to Maria all that day with bridled caution. That there might not exiſt between them even the trace of having differed in opinion, he went to her, confeſſed himſelf to blame in the urgency with which he had preſſed his requeſt, gave to her conduct the praiſe it ſo juſtly merited, and entreated her forgiveneſs on the ground he had before maintained, that time and events would, perhaps, ſhortly convince her, that he had acted on principles the moſt diſintereſted and juſtifiable. He was too candid to be ever ſuſpected; Maria was too ingenuous herſelf to refuſe credit to ſerious proteſtations: ſhe had an advocate in her boſom that always ſpoke aloud for Caſimir. —They were perfectly reconciled, and, perhaps, not the worſe friends for this ſeemingly trivial interruption of their good underſtanding.

But the next morning produced freſh uneaſineſs to both. Madame Fliders did not make her appearance at the uſual hour; and inſtead of her, they had a meſſage from one of the ſervants, that Madame had been haſtily called up in the night to ſee a dying friend a few miles off, that ſhe would return as ſoon as poſſible, and had deſired that during her abſence Maria would take the charge of her houſe and ſervants.

Caſimir

Caſimir and Maria looked at one another while this inteligence was delivering, and could ſcarcely credit it, as neither of them had heard the leaſt buſtle in the houſe during the night; but the ſervant was exact in the relation of circumſtances, and Caſimir could only regret that his mother in her exceſſive kindneſs had preferred the inconveniences of travelling alone to his being diſturbed to accompany her.

Maria now felt herſelf in a very awkward ſituation. The integrity of her own mind could not ſecure her from the whiſpers of the world, ſhould it be known, that ſhe was left, without protection or juſtification, to the ſole ſociety of Captain Fliders. She herſelf knew ſhe was perfectly ſafe, yet her feelings were ſo unpleaſant, and ſhe was ſo diſtreſſed by not knowing how long ſhe was to remain thus, that ſhe ſeriouſly meditated returning to Vienna that day, and choſe rather to riſque Madame's diſpleaſure for abandoning her poſt, than to remain in a place where, ſhould calumny once light on her, ſhe had no teſtimony that could clear her, nor ought to offer againſt the imputation of great imprudence.

Having formed her reſolution, ſhe ſent to Caſimir, candidly told him her apprehenſions and her difficulties, and begged him to procure her a conveyance to Vienna, and to excuſe her to his mother. He could not but approve her reſolution; but he could not permit her to put it in practice; becauſe he was thought to believe, that by returning to her father's houſe ſhe muſt be made accquainted with the family diſtreſs.

He tried to diſſuade her, but found his efforts ſo ſo ineffectual, that he had no means left of ſaving her from the miſery he apprehended ſhe muſt encounter at Vienna, but by the deſperate offer of withdrawing himſelf from his mother's houſe, on condition

condition ſhe would remain in it. To this ſcheme, her fear of giving Madame juſt cauſe of offence by baniſhing her ſon, made her object, and ſhe ſtill inſiſted on returning to her father.—Caſimir, in the utmoſt perplexity, was ſilent for ſome moments; at length neceſſity forced him to ſpeak, and having beſpoke Maria's attention, he ſaid to her,

"The ſhort period of our acquaintance renders "it preſumption in me to refer to that for a teſti- "mony of my integrity, but I truſt a very brief "intercourſe is ſufficient for any one to develope "my character; and I am certain, no one at all "acquainted with it, will impute to either a diſpo- "ſition or talents in the leaſt inclined or fited to "diſſimulation; conſcious of this, I am apt to "*inſiſt* on being believed in whatever I aſſert; "but with you I only *entreat* it. You wiſh, nor "can I blame you, to return home in preference "to remaining here with me alone. I know what "I ought to do in ſuch a caſe; I ought to procure "you a female companion; I ought to accompany "you as your protector, and then, when under "your father's roof, I might avow my preten- "ſions, and requeſt his approbation of them. "All this is eaſy to do, and preſently to be done "in idea; but it is feaſible in idea only, for without "the gift of prophecy I can foreſee that your re- "turn home, ſo far from relieving your mind, "would much more ſeriouſly diſtreſs you; and "ſtrange as you may think it, and derogatory as "it ſeems from your principles, I am convinced, "that though I have every proof ſhort of certainty "that your father would conſent to reſign you to "me, you yourſelf would oppoſe it; and if you "act at Vienna conſiſtently with your practice "here, I am confident the whole world will not "be able to procure me the hapineſs I am ſolici- "citing."

Maria

Maria could not adhere to her vow of ſilence, when ſhe heard herſelf, as ſhe thought, ſo ſcandalouſly impeached. She warmly controverted Calimir's ill-founded ſuppoſitions: ſhe was aſtoniſhed he knew her ſo ill as to ſuſpect her for a moment of ſuch baſe conduct.

"Be patient one moment longer," ſaid Captain Fliders, "till you know completely what I mean: "when I hint the poſſibility of your refuſing me, "I mean not to call your integrity in queſtion. I "repeat that at Vienna you will refuſe me—it "will be the height of virtue in you to do ſo. I "ſhall admire you, the world will admire you, "and we ſhall both be wretched.—You will make "your father miſerable; but you will prefer what "you will think a higher duty to your obedience to "him. This will be the conſequence of your go-"ing home.—I dare not explain myſelf farther, "for I am bound by honour to ſecrecy. To avoid "this impending miſchief entirely, there is but "one way, but that is the way you have refuſed, "and I dare not again mention—the middle path "is what I now propoſe. Suffer me now to re-"join my regiment; I will vindicate you to my "mother: and if you are not fearful of remaining "here alone till ſhe return, you may be at reſt. "At the ſame time that I give you this advice, "in which you cannot ſuppoſe my intereſts or in-"clination have any ſhare, I will not conceal "from you, that even here I run a moſt dangerous "riſque; for from my knowledge of the preſent "ſituation of affairs, I am juſtified in fearing, that "when I quit you here I quit you for ever. "Forgive me, Maria, for inſinuating again what "appears ill to agree with your ſcrupulous honour. "Believe me to ſee farther than you do; and "take it implicity on my word, that I ſtand a very "ſmall chance for ever being your huſband if I am

"not

" not ſo before you leave his houſe, though I am
" as confident as poſſible, that your father would
" regard our union as the providential intervention
" of Heaven in his favour. I give you an hour
" to ruminate on this, alone; and if I then hear
" nothing from you, I ſhall prepare for my jour-
" ney, and immediately rejoin the army."

He left the room as he ended theſe words, and Maria, now ready to weep with tenderneſs, and now burſting with indignation, ſat down to the galling employment he had left her. She could make nothing of his dark prophecies; ſhe was forced to diſcard them from the ſubject, and to diveſt it of every conſideration but thoſe of prudence and of duty, and when ſhe had done, notwithſtanding all the whiſpers of love, ſhe was inflexibly reſolved to return to Vienna.—The preſent day was too far ſpent to be made uſe of for journey, but on the following morning ſhe determined at all events to ſet out.

Something ſo obſtinately oppoſing roſe in her boſom, whenever ſhe thought of informing Caſimir of her reſolution, that ſhe wiſhed heartily to get away privately: but this not being poſſible, and his going depending on her ſilence, ſhe was forced to ſeek him, and attempt to tell him how ſhe had decided the queſtion.

She found him, and ſo ſteadily uttered the words, *I have thought on this painful ſubject as carefully as I can, and I ſee no courſe I can take ſo ſafely as going home*, that ſhe gained courage from her own firmneſs, and made no doubt of her ability to proceed; but a look from Captain Fliders, who in ſilence fixed his eyes on her, and expreſſively ſhook his head, checked the ſtreams of her ſuppoſed eloquence, and in guſhing tears ended at once her ſpeech and her fortitude.

It

It was now his turn to propoſe; but ſhe had almoſt loſt the power of liſtening. Parting from Caſimir—parting from him ſuſpected of an intentional breach of faith—in a degree under his diſpleaſure, as ſhe fancied herſelf, it was more than ſhe could ſupport—conſcious integrity had now loſt its force. Caſimir was, in her idea, a being endued with intellectual powers that penetrated farther into the receſſes of her heart and of futurity, than ſhe was aware of. He knew her better than ſhe did herſelf; he could ſee where ſhe would fail, while pride or ſelf-love kept her blind to the danger; why, then, ſhould ſhe not truſt to his guidance for the means of eſcaping it?

Her tears, the altered tone of her voice, and the meek accompaniment of her features, at once proclaimed her firmneſs ſubdued, and ſo entirely, that before even ſhe had power to acquieſce, it was neceſſary to reſtore ſome part of it to her.—Caſimir, too acute to paſs over this change without obſerving it, too well bred to take notice of it, and too honeſt to make any unfair advantage of it, tried only to ſooth her, and finding her more than ever at a loſs, he ventured to ſubmit to her conſideration in the ſimpleſt terms the various plans he had propoſed.

He now found nothing to oppoſe his adverting to the firſt of them, nor was it received with the aſperity it had before met with. The cloſing twilight had nearly bid them adieu, and was departing unnoticed, when Maria Kluber, depending on the reiterated aſſurances of Captain Fliders, that her father would not only acquieſce in but be pleaſed with her union, promiſed to be his without the intervention of one ſcruple, or a moment's unneceſſary delay.

CHAP. XVII.

IMMEDIATELY as Caſimir had obtained and poured out his gratitude for this condeſcenſion, he haſtened to the houſe of a Lutheran curate in the neighbourhood, with whom he was acquainted, and on whom he relied either for his actual ſervices in uniting him to Maria Kluber, or for his information as to the forms preſcribed by the Catholic church, of which they were both members. This perſon happening to be from home, Captain Fliders was referred by an old woman ſervant who had let him in, to the curate's brother, who could better than herſelf anſwer his queries, and who was then in the houſe.

This man, half rogue and half fool, and who lived on the bounty of his brother, was an entire ſtranger to Captain Fliders; but happening to have that day dreſſed himſelf in the curate's accoutrements, for the ſake of making an important figure in a neighbouring village, he was by him ſuppoſed of the ſame profeſſion. Our bridegroom elect therefore proceeded to aſk ſuch queſtions as indicated his real buſineſs, and the pro-parſon perceiving that a little money might be very *eaſily*, if not very *honeſtly*, obtained, led him on in his error, and being perfectly diſpoſed to ſmooth all impediments, he offered himſelf immediately to accompany Captain Fliders to any place where he wiſhed the ceremony performed, and for a round ſum of money, for which his client did not in the leaſt haggle, to do the friendly office, at the ſame time

aſſuring him, and offering to refer to a variety of authors and living witneſſes to prove that a mariage contracted inſtantly, without any legal prefaces, and according to the rights of the reformed church, not the diet of Ratiſbon itſelf could abrogate. He talked *plauſibly*, and, which is ſtill more efficacious, *poſitively*—in Caſimir he had a willing auditor, and a docile diſciple. They returned together to Caſimir's home, where Maria was prevailed on to accept the good man's ſervice, and without a witneſs, peſently became the wife of Captain Fliders.

No ſolicitations could prevail on him they were ſo indebted to, to remain a moment longer than was neceſſary, where he had conferred ſuch an obligation. He declined all thanks, pocketed his fee, and ſcampered away in a mixed temper of joy and fear.

The natural timidity which was a part of Maria's compoſition, made her preſently dread Madame's return. As ſoon as ſhe could at all recover her compoſure, ſhe felt that ſhe had acted clandeſtinely, and to her uncorrupted judgment this ſeemed ſomewhat akin to guilt; but Caſimir, who had neither fears nor doubts on this head, had influence enough over her to re-aſſure her; and ſo confidently pledged himſelf for his mother's approbation, that they both welcomed her the next day, when ſhe came home, with unconſtrained joy.

Firſt enquiries and expreſſions of gladneſs over, Captain Fliders exultingly introduced Maria to her as his wife and her daughter-in-law, and expected immediate congratulations on his ſucceſs. What, then, was the damp his joys received, when a could ſpread itſelf over his mother's face, and her eyes declared her nonaſſent to his precipitation! He had not believed her capable of the reſentment ſhe now expreſſed; her integrity was impeached, her character with the Secretary was entirely ruined

ruined by their preſumptuous folly :—it was hard, indeed, that ſhe could not quit her houſe for a few hours, and then only to perform the laſt duties to a dying friend, but her ruin muſt be inſtantly projected and executed. However Secretary Kluber might blame her, ſhe would convince him ſhe was no leſs indignant than himſelf. She inſiſted on an immediate ſeparation between the bridegroom and his bride: ſhe would reſtore her inſtantly to her father, and adviſe him to annul the marriage.

" Firſt hear me, Madam," replied Caſimir as ſoon as ſhe pauſed for a moment: " We have united ourſelves in the ſight of Heaven, and we have called on the Diety himſelf to witneſs our union. I have till now ever obeyed you as your ſon; but here another duty claims a prior regard. I have offended you ignorantly; but I am not mean enough to *wiſh* a reſtoration of your favour by retracting. As a ſon I am bound to ſubmit; as a huſband, to act: and forgive the ſeeming irreverence I am compelled to, if I ſay and make my words good, that not all the authority you have a right to, or can aſſume, ſhall influence me for one moment to forego the charge of protecting her I have moſt ſolemnly, moſt religiouſly married. Abandon us, exile us, uſe all your power for our deſtruction, you will but the cloſer unite us. At the ſame time that I repel *injury* from my wife, I will guard her from *inſult*, and ſhall therefore immediately withdraw her from your houſe. Leave me to ſettle the matter with her father: I am confident of his ready forgiveneſs, becauſe you have encouraged me to hope for it. Till you recall us with kindneſs, you will find me in the neighbourhood of my profeſſional duty."

Madame ſtared as if wholly at a loſs. Caſimir took Maria's hand, and would have led her away;

but ſhe whom greater unkindneſs could not have rendered unmindful of paſt favours, though ſhe felt the ſeverity, confeſſed it juſt, and weeping bitterly, could not be drawn away till ſhe had at leaſt endeavoured to ſoften the rigid virtue ſhe admired. She knelt to Madame; ſhe entreated her pardon, as if by conſenting to the alliance ſhe had brought diſgrace upon her huſband's family. The indignant matron ſeemed even in her anger to make a juſt diſtinction. The whole blame ſhe threw on Caſimir. Maria ſhe *ſincerely pitied*, and offered her mediation with her father, if ſhe would relinquiſh Caſimir, and return home.

The propoſition ſtopped the fair one's tears, and raiſed her on her feet. She turned away in ſilence, linked her arm in Caſimir's, and like our firſt parents driven from Paradiſe, prepared to ſeek the world with him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE unrepenting exiles retired to a village five or ſix miles from Madame Fliders, from whence it was Caſimir's reſolution to write to the Secretary, divulging all that had paſſed, and entreating his kind reception of his daughter; and if his letter produced the conſequence he did not doubt of, in the Secretary's ſuppoſed circumſtances, it was his farther intention to leave Maria with her father, while he was obliged to be with his regiment.

He had written a part of ſuch a letter as he thought fit for the purpoſe, when a meſſage from Madame Fliders recalled him to hear ſome important intelligence ſhe had to communicate. He obeyed the ſummons willingly, and, unaccompanied by his wife, returned home for a few hours. Madame received him with an unintelligible countenance; indignation yet dwelt in it, but it was indignation for which her ſon felt grateful, as he fancied he ſaw it combated by a predominant affection for him: encouraged by the idea, he took her hand, and in a tone of modeſt pleaſantry requeſted her to ſee their venial fault in a more favourable light; obſerved, that the error was neither new nor irrational; deſired her to recollect her own previous opinion of Maria's attractions, and the many converſations they had held on the ſubject, acknowledged his precipitation not altogether to be juſtified, but vindicated the principle on which he had acted.

Madame ſhook her head, as if ſhe ſaw farther into a gloomy futurity than her ſon, whoſe thoughts, it muſt be confeſſed, were more occupied with preſent enjoyments than with fears of what might enſue, and who in the ebullition of his ſpirits forgot whatever might happen to depreſs them.

" You have entangled yourſelf moſt fooliſhly," ſaid his mother; " had you waited but till a few " hours ago, you would have ſeen cauſe to alter " your meaſures, if not to abandon them. An- " xious as I was to promote whatever you wiſhed, " and important as I thought it, that you ſhould " have every poſſible information before you " opened your intentions to the Secretary, I was, " perhaps, too haſty in communicating to you " what intelligence I had received, before I knew " on what ground it was authenticated: a letter " confidently written, by one whoſe veracity I " had no cauſe to diſtruſt, and whom I conſidered " as wholly unintereſted in the news he ſent me, " induced me, in the ſame ſpirit he wrote in, to " intruſt to you the contents of his letter, and on " that authority I told you how the Secretary's " affairs had been ruined: I have juſt now learnt, " that the whole was a fabrication to anſwer ſome " ſiniſter purpoſe."

" God be praiſed," exclaimed Caſimir, ſtarting from his ſeat; " how much affliction will this " ſpare my dear Maria!"

" Softly," cried Madame, in a gentle tone; " before you exult thus for Maria's ſake, think of " your own ſituation: you are her huſband with- " out the conſent of her father; and my preſent " information teaches me to believe, that, even " with all my endeavours to increaſe your property " and elevate you in the world, it was not poſſible " to give you requiſites for his accepting you.

" His

" His favour at Court, I underſtand, puts every " thing in his power, and makes him aſpire to " the higheſt connections: his wealth is accumu- " lating to a degree that makes the firſt families " court his alliance; and Maria Kluber is talked " of as deſtined for a young man of the higheſt " rank, and who is a principal favourite with the " Emperor. In ſhort, the friend who brings me " this intelligence, and who has it from his own " obſervation, has given me ſuch an account of " Secretary Kluber's ſituation, as leaves me no " room to hope he would conſent to a match not " *very much* above his daughter's preſent condition, " and, ſuperadded to theſe unpropitious circum- " ſtances, I am under the diſagreeable neceſſity of " telling you, that during my ſhort abſence from " home I have heard of the total bankruptcy of a " man to whom, in the fulleſt confidence of his " integrity, I had, by the advice of my moſt " able friends, entruſted almoſt the whole of my " property, and a great part of your's: this loſs, " which at preſent only I feel, will oblige me to " the ſtricteſt practice of œconomy; but that I " do not in the leaſt regret; I am hurt at this ac- " cident, only as it renders you entirely an unfit " match for Maria Kluber."

Here pauſed the artful dame, to ſee how her ſtory worked on Caſimir. He was ſtunned for ſome minutes; but his ſpirit preſently roſe to meet the misfortune. He thought it a comfort that he now ſaw the worſt of his ſituation: his profeſſion ſecured her he loved beyond all worldly intereſt, from the galling evils of poverty. He believed her attachment to him too ſtrong to be ſhaken by any of the chances of life. He was only hurt at having now obliged her to ſhare his calamities, and at having pledged himſelf for her father's approbation.

Madame, as if to reward the fortitude he had evinced, but in reality delighted with the magnanimity of his ſpirit, having on a ſudden torn off a maſk ſhe had been for years compelled to wear, promiſed him every aſſiſtance her limited powers could command, and ſat down ſeriouſly to conſult with him on the beſt means of improving their unpromiſing ſituation. Caſimir was for going immediately to Vienna, avowing to the Secretary the raſhneſs he had been guilty of, and endeavouring to appeaſe him. But the ſtrait road never tempted Madame Fliders; ſhe loved a bye-path ever ſo thorny, better than all the highways in Chriſtendom.

"And what," ſaid ſhe, "do you expect would "be the conſequence of our open applications of "this kind?

"That Secretary Kluber would either declare "himſelf implacable, and baniſh us, or ſhew a "diſpoſition to forgiveneſs, and receive us!"

"Not ſo, believe me, Caſimir. He would in-"quire into the circumſtances and forms of your "precipitate marriage. He would inſtantly diſco-"ver that it was null; he would ſeparate your "wife from you, and diſpoſe of her per force to "the nobleman who is in expectation of her "hand."

"Then far be my ſteps from Vienna," ſaid Captain Fliders, chilled from head to foot with the conviction that this was poſſible; for it was only in the phrenzy of his paſſion that the illegality of their union was concealed from his diſcernment.

Availing himſelf of the good temper to which he had brought his mother, he begged her advice as to the new mode of conduct he muſt purſue; but here even our adept in ſubterfuge was at a nonplus: for half an hour ſhe repented, as ſincerely

cerely as a ſinner under ſevere puniſhment, the part ſhe had acted, but her repentance and perplexity were preſently ended together.

The poſt came in and brought her a letter from Secretary Kluber; the firſt ſhe had received ſince ſhe had found it neceſſary to vindicate her conduct. Her hands trembled while ſhe opened it, and ſhe could ſcarcely credit her eyes when ſhe read expreſſions of kindneſs and confidence with which it ſet out, an apology for the ſuſpicions he had entertained, and a requeſt that Maria might remain with her a twelvemonth longer, as her ſiſter had diſpoſed of herſelf in a way not at all to his ſatisfaction, and ſtate affairs required him to take a long journey, from which he expected not to return in leſs than a year. He repeated in reſpectful terms his mention of Captain Fliders, as a young officer for whom he had the higheſt regard, but intimated his reſolution never to ſanction any attachment between him and Maria, by ſaying he had a connection in view for her which he was ſure ſhe could not diſapprove, and which he ſhould endeavour to bring to bear as ſoon as he returned home.

This letter Madame ſhewed to her ſon, and he felt the conſolation of its contents, as at leaſt affording him ſome leiſure to look round him; and as ſoon as his mother and he had agreed that with regard to the Secretary they had now nothing to do but to remain quiet for the happy period preſcribed, and with regard to their family affairs they had only to perſevere in a courſe of ſtrict œconomy; he in all the rapture of inconſiderate joy, flew to bring back Maria to his home, and in their way thither he unfolded to her the whole occaſion of his conduct, ſtating the falſe report circulated reſpecting her father, and concealing from her nothing but the illegality of their mar-

riage. She, a ſtranger to the perſon who had united them to the requiſite forms, ſuſpected nothing: ſhe knew only, that with all the ſincerity the human heart is capable of, ſhe had bound herſelf to the only man ſhe believed capable of promoting her happineſs; to him ſhe looked not only as a protector, but as an impregnable ſecurity, and perhaps her feeling would not have been much ſhocked had this circumſtance been revealed; for her confidence in Caſimir was not leſs than in the purity of her own intentions.

CHAP. XIX.

A LITTLE diſconcerted at the intimation her father gave of a formed reſolution to diſpoſe of her, but not at all moved by Caſimir's report of the pecuniary loſs his mother and he had ſuſtained, Maria returned with gladneſs to a home that love had at once endeared and ſanctified to her; and for ſome weeks enjoyed a degree of felicity, which experience in the tide of human affairs would, perhaps, have led her to ſuſpect as a calm forboding ſtorm; but the world's atmoſpere had been all a calm, and ſometimes in her opinion a dead calm, till ſhe became acquainted with Captain Flider's; then, indeed, it had been ruffled with a few ſtorms; but if they had in them aught of the terrific, ſhe fancied they had alſo their beauties, and when fair weather ſucceeded to them, ſhe could confeſs them agreeable in their conſequences.

The firſt unpleaſant circumſtance ſhe met with in her new character of a wife, was Captain Fliders's ſudden call to join his regiment in leſs than three months after his marriage. The ſervice that required his preſence, ſhe knew to be in the higheſt degree dangerous, and grievous was their parting; but they had each a ſpirit that taught them to bear up under honourable calamity, and they ſubmitted with a good grace.

Privacy was the firſt meaſure Madame had adopted after the partial ſettlement of her affairs; and

and hinting vaguely that ſhe had ſuffered in her finances, ſhe inducced thoſe who would have aſſociated with her to keep aloof. It had been determined among the trio concerned, that Maria's father muſt on no account hear of the ſtep ſhe had taken without his concurrence, till they themſelves thought proper to divulge it; and to keep this ſecret, it ſoon became indiſpenſably neceſſary that Madame ſhould ſhift her quarters, and that her daughter-in-law ſhould not be ſeen.

Theſe conſiderations were an impediment to what Caſimir was extremely anxious for, a re-performance of their marriage. Whenever he hinted it, his mother deluged him with invincible reaſons againſt ſo dangerous a ſtep; and he conſented to poſtpone it, ſtill keeping Maria ignorat that it was at all neceſſary.

After an abſence of nearly ſix months, Captain Fliders returned to his wife and mother, abundantly recompenſed for all the fatigues and perils he had encountered. In the midſt of danger he had eſcaped unhurt, and had conducted himſelf with much coolneſs and intrepidity, and obtained ſuch ſucceſſes, as recommended him not only to the particular favour of the General under whom he had commanded, but likewiſe procured him the notice of the Emperor, who, charmed with his ſpirit, and promiſing abilities, had inſtantly, on his introduction, raiſed him one degree in rank, and, before the concluſion of the campaign, had advanced him again to the rank and pay of colonel of foot.

Nothing now was wanting to the felicity of the young couple but the ſanction of a father's approbation, a bleſſing they dared not hope for, and ſcarcely ventured to hint to each other, as not in their poſſeſſion. Soon after their re-union their joys were improved by increaſe, and a beautiful blue-eyed infant, the epitome of its father's comelineſs,

lineſs, and its mother's charms, made its appearance, as if offering itſelf another advocate with Secretary Kluber.

Maria now was entirely loſt in the duties and raptures of her relative ſituation, and ſafe in port, dreamt not of the ſtormy ocean. In the ſolitude of their abode, neither the buſtle nor news of life reached them. Col. Fliders was occupied with the purchaſe and preparation of a ſmall farm, ſome miles from them, which, it was evident, though he concealed his purpoſe, he deſigned as an aſylum for his wife and child, in caſe his worſt apprehenſions ſhould be realiſed; and at preſent, unintereſted in the affairs of the world, he inquired not after them.

But Madame, his mother, had better intelligence, and more curioſity. She had a correſpondent in Vienna, to whoſe ear much more was entruſted by her huſband than it was always prudent to reveal; but the *cacoethes ſcribendi* was ſo ſtrong in the tattling goſſip, and Madame was ſo grateful for her communications, that not one idea ever entered the good woman's head, that ſhe was endangering her huſband's.

At the time we are ſpeaking of, a fine field opened itſelf for amuſing her epiſtolatory friend; and as ſhe had a ſecret to impart, in which ſhe believed ſhe could not be either foreſtalled or copied, ſhe felt not a little vain on the occaſion —To be able to do miſchief, when we have no taſte for better employment, is ſometimes deemed a *rational* ground for exultation.

The ſpies of the Imperial court had, for ſome time paſt, fixed their eyes on Secretary Kluber, who was believed to have been bought over by Pruſſian ducats to join a conſpiracy forming againſt the eagle of Auſtria. His journey, which had been

been voluntary, had ſo effectually rouſed latent ſuſpicions, both in his maſter, and fellow-ſervants, that (ſuch is the unaccountable frailty of human nature, and the fluctuating power of temp ation!) he, who, for a long ſeries of years, had in every poſſible way evinced his loyalty, had, in conſequence of a trifling diſguſt, abandoned his principles, and was preparing to ſhake the throne he had often contributed his aid to ſupport. The proofs againſt him were ſuch as hardly left the leaſt ground either for exulpation or excuſe; but leſt he ſhould be deterred from returning, by knowing he was detected, the matter was to remain an inviolable ſecret in the cabinet, till he was within the Government's graſp. This important affair had been, in the intoxication of fondneſs, communicated by a Member of the State to his miſtreſs; ſhe had betrayed it to her *ceciſbeo*, a ſtateſman of inferior rank; and he, in hopes of ſmoothing the brow of a jealous wife, had intruſted her with it, and from her it had paſſed like the electrical ſhock, to her *chere amie*, Madame Fliders.

Here it ſeemed to have ſpent its force. It ſunk into her breaſt as into an unfathomable abyſs; but, in reality, it was a dagger to her ſoul, which ſhe could not extract. She could at firſt only reſolve that no one ſhould ſhare the intelligence till ſhe had duly weighed the misfortune, and then ſhe ſhut herſelf up in ſeeming ſickneſs, to ruminate on it.

Had it included only the ruin of Secretary Kluber, and the loſs of Maria's fortune, or even of her peace, could Caſimir have eſcaped, Madame had been comparatively happy; but with the news, her friend had ſent her the opinion her huſband entertained of the culprit's danger. Should he be proved guilty, no doubt could

could be entertained that his life muſt pay the forfeit: a confiſcation of all his property muſt of courſe follow; yet this, bad as it was, was not the worſt. In a recent inſtance of a ſimilar defection from loyalty, the Emperor had puniſhed it, not only by ſeverity towards the perſon and eſtate of the traitor, but by entirely ſetting his face againſt all connected with him, either by conſanguinity or alliance: he had even proceeded ſo far, as to exile two innocent perſons related to his offending ſervant, as Caſimir now was to the Secretary; and had treated the whole family, in its utmoſt extenſion, with the harſheſt cruelty, declaring it his intention ever, in like caſes, to do ſo, ſince he found ſome rebels, who could not feel either perſonal or pecuniary puniſhment, were not dead to that which their innocent friends, or relatives, ſuffered on their account.

A ſhort time before, Madame would have built ſome ſmall hope on the particular favour the Emperor had expreſſed towards her ſon; but now that was unfortunately obliterated, by his having been neceſſitated to join the army he had ſerved with, in a petition to the throne for the redreſs of ſome very ſerious grievances: grievances, it was true, which he himſelf did not feel; but the men under his commnnd ſuffered ſharply by them, and thoſe above him in command had exacted his ſubſcription of the petition, in a way that left no option, but obedience, or the ſtigma of ingratitude.

This petition had not only failed of its effect, but had met with the ſevereſt reprehenſion; and murmuring diſcontent ſoon excited in the troops a diſpoſition to mutiny; the army, and particularly Caſimir's regiment, were under a general ſuſpicion, and cloſe watched.

This

This ſtormy appearance it was, together with the conſiderations before hinted at, that induced Colonel Fliders to apply himſelf to peaceful occupations, and kept him as much as poſſible, aloof from his former companions, and out of hearing the buz of diſcord.

Nothing could be more unlucky than this caſual combination of circumſtances, which, though perfectly independent of each other, Madame's penetration taught her, would now act conjointly, and, in their cataſtrophe involve the ruin of her beloved Caſimir.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

CIRCUMSTANCES ſo alarming as thoſe we have ſtated, required the cogitations of no common intellect to avert their conſequence. As they were, it muſt be confeſſed, of a nature extremely unpleaſant, they excited none but gloomy ideas in the mind of Madame, which at length perverted her affections in part, and left nothing but her doating love for Caſimir in an unaltered ſtate.

That partiality ſhe had entertained for Maria before her marriage, and which had been increaſed into ſomething more after it, in an inſtant vaniſhed, when ſhe perceived that her ſon muſt probably ſink in the fate of his father-in-law's houſe. She now, therefore, only ſaw her in the light of an enemy, and theſe unfavourable, and equally unjuſt ſentiments meeting and claſhing with her exceſſive maternal fondneſs, produced an implacable hatred towards the innocent cauſe of her fears, whom ſhe not only repented of having ever countenanced, but reſolved, at all events, and not heſitating at the moſt neſarious means, to ſeparate from Caſimir, before the impending ruin ſhould fall on them.

Having digeſted her plan, ſhe ſhook off all appearance of a thoughtful mind, and turned, as uſual, to the ſociety of her family, carrying the ſame face as ever towards her ſhe was ſecretly projecting to ruin; for ſhe knew the heart and affections both of her ſon and Maria too well, to hope that any thing could perſuade them to avail themſelves of the means

means of ſeparation their informal marriage left them. Perſuaſion, ſhe was convinced, would be loſt on them; threats, ſhe ſuppoſed, would but unite them the cloſer; and the leaſt ſuſpicion they might catch of her diſapprobation, ſhe expected, would drive them to ſeek peace and ſecurity elſewhere.

Concealment ſo cloſe as was now required, made her extremely deſirous to diſpatch the buſineſs ſhe had undertaken; and her induſtry was ſtill farther ſpurred by the approach of the time Secretary Kluber had named for his return, when ſhe rightly imagined the ſtorm would inſtantly break on the heads of him and his family. No time was therefore to be loſt; and to excite Caſimir's jealouſy of his wife appearing the readieſt way of ruining her, and of getting rid of her, Madame waited impatiently for an opportunity of doing this ſo delicately, as entirely to keep her ſon ignorant that ſhe at all acted in the buſineſs.

The wicked ſeldom wait long for time or means. Their grand co-adjutor is generally furniſhed, and diſpoſed to furniſh them, with all things neceſſary to their ſucceſs and deſtruction. A meeting of Colonel Fliders's regiment was ſummoned to reconſider their ſituation, and a wiſh to lend his aid towards quieting their minds, and reducing them to a leſs mutinous temper, induced him to obey the ſummons. He by accident, mentioned this ſeemingly trivial circumſtance firſt to his mother; at the ſame time telling her, it would require his abſence from home from the Tueſday, when he was to ſet out, till late on the Friday night. Madame's evil genius inſtantly whiſpered to her the advantage this abſence offered—Expreſſing only an affectionate regret that ſhe muſt loſe him even for a few days and promiſing to pay every attention to his wife and child in his abſence, ſhe begged him to indulge her, by telling Maria rather to expect

him

him on the Saturday than Friday, alleging, as a very ſufficient reaſon for this requeſt, that, in all his abſences, ſhe had perceived his wife ſo agitated with hope and joy when his return approached, that it would befriend her ſpirits much, if, by coming before ſhe looked for him, he ſaved her the palpitation of expecting him.—Caſimir thanked her for the affectionate hint, and made uſe of it.

Strict as was the union between Caſimir and Maria, they had not fallen into the error of that puling fondneſs which makes caſual ſeparation miſery. As he could not have juſtified to his own mind his abſence from the buſineſs he went on, he felt leſs pain in quitting his wife than in the non-performance of his duty; and, on her part, ſhe had a ſpirit which diſdained uſing one art, or expreſſing one ſentiment, that could give her huſband's love for her an improper influence over his reaſon. —Their parting was not, therefore, that of Hector and Andromache, but of two rational beings, whoſe mutual love conſtituted their enjoyment, but who had minds ſuperior to its intoxications. No fore bodings diſturbed them; and when Maria, after watching her huſband out of ſight, turned into the houſe with her infant in her arms, ſhe ſmothered him with kiſſes, not as her only poſſeſſion, but as the dear repreſentative of his father.

Maria had been for ſome days ſlightly indſpoſed; and Madame, redoubling her anxieties and attentions towards her, now that ſhe was left ſolely to her care, was moſt tenderly uneaſy about her, and particularly concerned, leſt, as ſhe ſlept at a diſtance from her, and out of hearing of the ſervants, ſhe might ſuffer any inconvenience from being alone at night. Maria had too much kind conſideration, even for her inferiors, to be pleaſed with purchaſing her own ſecurity at the price of a ſervant's reſt: ſhe conſequently declined Madame's

preſſing

preſſing requeſt that ſome one might ſit up with her; but on the night when Madame *did expect*, and Maria *did not expect*, Colonel Fliders home, her indiſpoſition requiring rather more attention than ſhe had yet beſtowed on it, ſhe conſented that an elderly woman ſervant, who had lived many years in the family, ſhould ſleep with her, to be ready at her call. Her kind mother-in-law's mind ſeemed much relieved by this acquieſcence; ſhe perſuaded her patient to take a medicine, that, ſhe aſſured her, ſhe had often proved the efficacy of in procuring quiet reſt; and the effect verified her ſkill; for no ſooner were the maid-ſervant and her young miſtreſs laid down, than they fell profoundly aſleep.

Madame had found it no difficulty to perſuade Maria to go to bed two or three hours before her uſual time. The hope of being recovered to meet Colonel Fliders the next day, would have induced her to much greater compliance. She, therefore, was ſafe at reſt long enough before he was expected, to give Madame time to enter the room, and change all the ſervant's clothes for ſuch as indicated Maria's guard to be of the other ſex.

She had ſufficient ſkill in the power of medicine to know there was for ſome hours no danger of detection; and her plan was completely perfected when her ſon returned within half an hour of the time he had named.

He was received by his mother with placid looks and affectionate ſmiles, nothing in her countenance betraying the leaſt cauſe of ſuſpicion. He enquired after his wife and child, and was concerned to hear that the former, finding herſelf unwell, had retired to reſt early. Madame, however, repreſented her illneſs as very ſlight, and ſpoke of her going to bed ſooner than common, not as her perſuaſion, but as Maria's own choice.

When

When they were about to part for the night, Madame was particularly careful in desiring her son to go with as little noise as possible into his wife's apartment. He began to hesitate on the propriety of going there at all, considering that she was, perhaps, composed for the night, and that, according to his mother's plan of policy, his return must be a surprize to her. Here the scheme of mischief began to totter; but Madame assuring him that Maria would never forgive her being kept in ignorance till morning that he was come home, he took a light in his hand, and went to her.

He was half vexed and half pleased that she did not stir when he opened the door. Fearful of disturbing her, and yet wishing she would wake, he halted at every footstep, to listen if she moved. At last seeing the necessity that she should know gently that he was there, he ventured to open her curtains.

What could exceed his surprize and horror, when he saw his place already occupied, and perceived the scattered evidences that supplanted in the most unpardonable manner. A tremor seized him, and he could only gaze in astonishment, whilst poor Maria, unconscious of the peril that hovered over her, lay in sweet sleep, and perhaps dreamed of Casimir.

The first motion of his spirit, after his eyes were convinced, for at first he doubted whether he too was not asleep, was fury: his sword was half unsheathed, but a plaintive sigh Maria uttered, as if awaiting the stroke, smote him to the heart. He restored the instrument of death to its situation; he took up his light again, and left the room, love for Maria still so far predominating, as to make him unintentionally cautious when he shut the door.

Returning to the room he left his mother in, he found it empty, and in a distraction of mind no

power

power could calm, he ſat down, overwhelmed by his misfortunes. He wiſhed to ſee Madame; but for two hours was unable to attempt it: he then, burſting with the emotions of his ſwollen heart, went to her room; but the door was locked, and he ſuppoſed her faſt aſleep, as he could get no anſwer from within, after repeated calls.

Again he returned down ſtairs, and now the ebullition of his paſſions a little ſubſiding, he began to think what courſe he ſhould purſue. Every ſpecies of perſonal revenge he deſpiſed in theſe cooler moments, conſidering that the provocation he had witneſſed was not a fit ſubject for puniſhment. If Maria had beſtowed on another the affection he had a right to, and thought himſelf till now poſſeſſed of, *there* was the injury he felt. Her conduct afterwards he was indifferent about; and he now ſaw her as a wretch, whom it would be juſtice, but too cruel juſtice, to diſmiſs to her great account, thus heaping ſin on ſin.

"There is but one path left for me to take," ſaid he to himſelf—"I will for ever renounce her "——but my child! what ſhall become of that? "—Shall I leave it with her, to be brought up with "a vicious mother?—This would be offering a living "ſacrifice to the devil. Shall I leave it to *my* mother's "care?—Not till I am certain it is ſafe from *its own* "mother.—O! when I left the room, why did I "not bring him ſleeping from his cradle?—I "will return and fetch him.—But, ſtay; firſt let "me think"——

He again ſat down to gloomy rumination, the reſult of which was two ſhort letters, which with trembling fingers he wrote, ſealed, and laid on the table. The firſt was to Madame his mother, and contained only theſe words:

"Dearſt

" Deareſt MADAM,

" I have ocular demonſtration that Maria is unfaithful to me. It is impoſſible you can be privy to it, but ſhe has made you her dupe. I have left her as I found her, aſleep by the ſide of him ſhe prefers to me, and, after once more entering her chamber, to bring away my little boy, ſhall quit her for ever.—You ſhall hear from me again ſhortly.

" C. F."

The other was to Maria, and as follows:

" You have proved yourſelf too infamouſly abandoned to have any longer a claim to the title of my wife. I have divorced you from me for ever; and, for the firſt time ſince our marriage, I rejoice in its illegality.—I have taken the care of my child on myſelf entirely—You cannot ſtay longer at my mother's.—Perhaps your ſiſter will receive you till your father returns.—Let it never be known to any one that you were, even in idea, my wife.—Go, repent of your crimes; and that you may be happy in the next world, ſubmit patiently to be miſerable in this.

" C. F."

Having thus diſcharged his mind of a ſmall part of its cares, he crept ſoftly to the chamber of Maria, who was ſtill aſleep. He went to the cradle, by her bed-ſide, in which the infant was depoſited: he attempted to take it up, but its tender ſlumber was diſturbed, and it began to cry. Still Maria ſlept. He laid the child down again, irreſolute and trembling, till finding the continuance of its crying awaking no one, his courage and his fury returned together, and loud enough to have rouſed any one in a natural ſlumber, he exclaimed—

" Baſe

" Baſe wretch! unfeeling mother! how muſt thy " heart be hardened! Time was, when I have " known even a ſigh from this little one could " awake thee, and call thee up to ſtill it; but now, " in the arms of thy adulterous paramour, thou " haſt forgot thou art a wife or mother."—Pity for the neglected infant again ſtimulated him to ſnatch it, and, burſting into an agony of tears, he bore it off.

As if fearful that this poor wreck of his former felicity ſhould be torn from him by unpitying fate, he without calling his own ſervant to attend him, or making an hour's proviſion for his abſence from home, unlocked the doors, and departed, nothing either attracting or guiding him. To ſhield the infant from the cold night, he wrapt it in his cloak, and thus, befriended by the moon, wandered with it, as chance preſented a path, till day-break, when, almoſt ſpent with grief and fatigue, he ſat down on the earth, and his complaints ſung a lullaby to the child, who ſlept ſweetly, as ignorant, but not more innocent than its mother.

Here in a chill autumn morning, let us leave them and return to Madame, and her proſecution of her nefarious plan to ſave her darling from deſtruction, by ruining his peace.

CHAP. XXI.

TO keep clear of all ſuſpicion, (for the fineſt cob-web ſpinners are always the moſt delicate in the care of their work) Madame left her deceived ſon to the comforts of ſolitude when he had made the diſcovery; but it was not her intention to be long abſent, ſince ſhe well knew all depended on expedition; and that, ſhould ſhe wait till Maria awoke, it was fully in her power to clear herſelf. The good lady had, however, been caught in her own toils. She was afflicted with gouty ailments; and after ſhe had parted from her ſon, feeling her ſtomach attacked by this potent enemy of reſt, ſhe had ſent an ignorant ſervant to a cloſet for a medicine ſhe was accuſtomed to take. The bottle, containing the remainder of the cordial opiate ſhe had given Maria as a cure for her indiſpoſition, and the maid, *by way of favour*, in a glaſs of wine, ſtood foremoſt as having been the laſt called out, and ſhe had ſwallowed enough to ſet her at reſt before ſhe was aware of the miſtake. She believed an attempt to counteract the effect of the opiate might be dangerous, nor did ſhe care to have much ſaid on the ſubject. In its nature it was perfectly harmleſs; and as it ſtilled her pain, and its power

would, according to her calculation, be expended in a very few hours, and long before Maria would be ſtirring, ſhe judged it, on mature deliberation, beſt to acquieſce in the accident patiently.

Unfortunately for the poor victims of her plot, but luckily for herſelf, ſhe was correct in her ſuppoſitions, and the narcotic influence evaporated in time for her to viſit her daughter-in-law's room, and remove whatever might alarm her. Going to the cradle ſhe miſſed the child. This was indeed ſurpriſe to her, and her loud ſcreams awakened the mother, and her more ſleepy guard. Madame was now too ſincerely intereſted to feign, or conceal the cauſe of her diſtreſs. Maria's terror inſtantly deprived her of ſenſation, and all was miſery and confuſion, as even Madame herſelf had not foreſeen her ſon's carrying off the infant.

Deſcending to the lower part of the houſe, as ſoon as Maria's inſenſibility was revived into keener agony, in order to ſeek and inquire, the innocent ſufferer was the firſt to ſee on the table of the parlour the two billets that were at once to remove her apprehenſions for the ſafety of her babe, and ſtab her with a ſharper dagger than was ever prepared for a wife or mother's breaſt. She ſnatched the paper addreſſed to her, gazed wildly on the writing, and then claſping her hands in ſuffering too great even for a groan to eſcape her lips, ſhe ſunk on her face to the floor.

The magnanimity, ſhall we ſay? No: rather the infernal barbarity of a woman long practiſed in wiles, and careleſs whither they led her, ſeemed to ſeat itſelf on the brow of Madame when ſhe had read her ſon's condemnation of his wife. Yet a ſtranger would have thought the paſſions of her breaſt juſt reſentment, ſorrow for the cauſe, and pity, gentle pity for the guilty. She lent her aſſiſtance towards the recovery of her daughter-in-

law,

law, uſed ſoothing words, and tried, with every art hypocriſy could ſuggeſt, to comfort her; but but ſhe would not be comforted. She had loſt not only her huſband and her child, but ſhe had loſt her place in his eſteem. She believed it poſſible to convince him of his error; but if he could think her capable of infidelity, to what purpoſe ſhould ſhe ſet him right? Her peace was gone; for it depended not only on her conſcious rectitude, but in maintaining a degree of virtue ſo pellucid, that not even the ſmalleſt cloud could ever be fancied in it.

Madame finding her exactly in the temper ſhe wiſhed, diſpoſed at once to deplore her misfortune, and to reſent the injury offered her, reſolute in her determination to obey her huſband's mandate, and to keep the whole of their connection as ſecret as it was then, left her to the care of the woman ſhe had made uſe of to excite Colonel Fliders's jealouſy, and turned her attention towards him. No diligence ſhe could uſe was of any avail in tracing him, and ſhe was obliged to reſt contented on his aſſurance that ſhe ſhould ſhortly hear of him.

He had continued his promiſcuous wandering till day ſhone full on all the objects before him, when, finding his troubleſome yet invaluable charge extremely impatient for want of food, he bent his courſe towards a cottage, the ſmoke of newly-kindled fire attracted his notice: here, firſt knocking at the door, he entered, and found an aged man ſeated at his morning repaſt, while a young woman of no common beauty or grace ſeemed buſy and aſſiduous only for his comfort; her dreſs beſpoke her recently a widow, though her age had no matronly characteriſtic to confirm the

ſuppoſition. On the floor was all the encouragement Caſimir's wretched circumſtances could admit of—a vacant cradle! and when he looked firſt at that, and then at the concealed burthen his cloak enwrapped, the gliſtening eyes of the young woman, while they ſpoke welcome to the ſtranger, told him, ſhe too had cauſe for grief and an expreſſive ſhake of her head ſaid, but too plainly, that her cradle had loſt its living ornament.

"Might I preſume?" ſaid Caſimir, unfolding his cloak, heſitating, advancing and retreating, till the babe itſelf had half told the ſtory.—The old man, feeble, and ſhaking like autumn leaves about to drop, tried to riſe and ſupport himſelf on the elbow of his well-worn chair, while he bid the ſtranger welcome. The young woman, waiting impatiently the developement of the cloak, ſtood with arms, extended to receive what looks and ſigns, more than words, had taught her to expect; ſhe ſnatched the yielding infant to her boſom, and, as if forgetting it was not her own, ſhe offered it the food the recent death of her child had left her: the babe hung to her as to its mother, and too young and too happy to have any greater miſery than a caſual abſtinence, ſunk into peace and ſlumber.

It was now the old man's turn to take up the duties of hoſpitality: he preſſed the intruder to be ſeated, and to partake of his meal; but Caſimir was beyond the reach of all want; the repletion of his griefs would have made all food diſtaſteful to him, had he even been ſinking for need of it; but he accepted his kind hoſt's civility with thankfulneſs, and occupying the vacant chair, would have expreſſed his thanks, but words are not the property of ſorrow ſuch as his,

his, and the only language he could command, was that of bitter tears, which guſhed in torrents from his eyes, and ſeemed to excite more compaſſion than curioſity in his new friend.

At length, when this ferment of his mind ſomewhat abated, he heard the gentle accents of ſincere pity, accompanied by exhortations to ſubmiſſion to what might be the will of Heaven, flow from the venerable lips of the old man. In offers of ſervice he was explicit, though not profuſe; for, alas! his powers were far from equal to his wiſhes, but his words carried the weight of integrity with them. The woman, too, joined her tears and ſympathetic condolence, and Caſimir, who, however wretched, could never be ungrateful, ſtrove to anſwer their friendly expreſſions; he proceeded far enough to inform them, that he had been deceived in his conjugal confidence, and had ſnatched his child from a vicious mother, to reſcue it from ruin; when his voice again faltered, and his hearers were convinced, that griefs ſuch as his were death even in the recollection.

Their endeavours were now directed towards calming his perturbations; but neither the authority of grey-headed counſel, nor the perſuaſion of young lovelineſs, had any power on a breaſt ſo tortured. He begged to be allowed to indulge his grief; and while he thanked them for their humanity, convinced them that all attentions beſtowed on himſelf, were for the preſent uſeleſs.

He was, therefore, left to the only enjoyment he ſeemed capable of, but not to ſolitude. The old man went to his garden, and

the young woman divided her cares between houſehold duties and her new charge, her eyes gliſtening with ſympathy whenever they turned on him or his father, whoſe ſorrows ſhe ſeemed to think too ſacred to be broken in upon by the utterance of a word.

CHAP. XXII.

THE hour of dinner came. A meal, cleanly, frugal, but not ſparing, was prepared, and neither hoſt nor hoſteſs were backward in preſſing their ſad gueſt to partake of it; but all in vain: they ſaw the fruitleſſneſs of urgency, and forbore importuning him.

But when their temperate refreſhment was over, and the old man had, with a degree of energy that implied ſuperior ſenſibility, returned brief thanks to the providential hand whoſe bounty he had partaken, he ſeemed not ſatisfied in ſuffering the ſtranger to remain longer in this torpor of grief. He tried by gentle words to encourage him to bear up under his lot, and to rouſe the ſpirit of a man againſt the misfortunes of humanity. Caſimir groaned, and replied, that his misfortunes were far beyond what human nature could bear.—"Then be ſatisfied," replied his ancient monitor, "and "truſt to my experience, that he who now afflicts "thee will proportion thy ſtrength to the chaſtiſe-"ment. Heaven never puniſhed to deſtroy. Its "inflictions are, perhaps, medicines, which ſeem "to touch our vitals; but their tendency, however "painful their operation, is but to reſtore health. "And believe me, young man, I ſpeak not the "idle ſpeculations of declamatory reaſoners, but "the firm opinion one who has had far more

" grievous cauſe to contemplate the ways of hea-
" ven than your ſhort life can have afforded : I
" would prefer all the miſery you ſuffer, added to
" that I have already ſuffered ; to that ſtate of in-
" toxicating proſperity which thoſe often enjoy
" whom the divine grace ſeems to have abandoned
" to themſelves. This world was never intended
" for a ſcene of bliſs ; and I would adviſe all ſuch
" as fancy it ſo, to take good care their proſpect is
" not reverſed. A dead calm in the atmoſphere
" is not more to be ſuſpected than that perfect
" tranquillity of ſoul which confines the mind to the
" narrow circuit of this world. 'Tis an unnatural
" ſtagnation ; it cannot long endure ; and how can
" it end but in a tempeſt ?"

There was a modulation in the old man's voice ; there was a degree of conviction his words carried with them ; there was ſomething which for a moment recalled the vagrant fortitude of Caſimir : he was not perverſely deaf ; he could not but liſten ; and when his grey adviſer touched on the ſtring of woe, when he hinted that he was no ſtranger to calamity, the ſound was uniſon to the mind of his hearer, and raiſing his eyes to the countenance of the ſpeaker, they declared his attention.

" And have you, ſir," ſaid he, when a pauſe gave him opportunity, " have you known greater,
" or as great calamity as I have ? True, my life
" has been but ſhort, and till now it has been hap-
" py ; but the miſeries of the laſt twelve hours
" have been ſuch as would have embittered a whole
" century of bliſs."

" And ſhall the miſeries of half a day," replied the moral philoſopher with a benignant ſmile,
" bear down the ſpirit of a man ? Have the nur-
" ture and inſtruction of twenty years, for ſo many
" you muſt by your appearance have lived, been
" of ſo ſmall avail as not to cope with ſuch recent

affliction ?

" affliction? You, then, muſt be one of thoſe un-
" happy wretches whom deluding fortune has
" nurſed in the lap of enervating felicity. For
" ſhame, for ſhame, young man, if you have
" done nought your own heart condemns, let con-
" ſcious rectitude ſupport you; and if, as I infer
" from the few words you have uttered, you ſuf-
" fer by the villainy of others, do not let vice have
" the pleaſure of perceiving ſhe has the virtuous
" entirely in her power."

Caſimir moved himſelf on his ſeat: his features again began to writhe, and the gliſtening drops were once more ſtarting from his eyes; but now he ſtrove to ſuppreſs them; and leaning one arm over the back of the chair, and linking the fingers of both hands together, he ſat as if expecting the ſoft ſtream of the old man's ſoothing eloquence again to flow.

Not a turn of his countenance, not the leaſt alteration of his poſture, was loſt on the young woman; nor could her attention be for a moment ſuſpended, however ſhe was buſied. Taking advantage of his partial re-animation, ſhe preſſed him to accept ſomewhat of food, and with ſuch perſuaſion reiterated the old man's admonitions to exert himſelf, that he no longer refuſed. As if he had conferred an obligation by endeavouriug to ſupport himſelf, his hoſt promiſed to reward his acquieſcence by every act of friendſhip his contracted abilities left him. The woman's kindneſs was ſtill more effectual, for ſhe voluntarily took on herſelf the charge of the infant. Caſimir thanked them with increaſed firmneſs; and, as if wiſhing to learn by example how he might bear his novel load of miſery, he hinted his curioſity to know how he had been ſurpaſſed in affliction. The old man recollecting himſelf, and pauſing, as if he too ſtood in need of the precepts he had been enforcing, having pre-

faced his communication by beſpeaking the patience of his auditors, began:

" The honourable profeſſion your dreſs and ap-
" pearance announce you to belong to, makes it
" more than probable you have heard the name of
" Baron de Greuſs—him, humbled as you ſee me,
" and in this retirement nearly cut off from the
" world, am I. I am a native of Sileſia, by right
" of conqueſt, not by birth, a ſubject of the king
" of Pruſſia, and by education and choice one of
" his military ſervants. My father and mother
" living together many years without hope of
" iſſue, were induced by the beſt motives to adopt
" a nephew, the ſon of my mother's brother, whoſe
" family being of an elevated rank, without poſ-
" ſeſſing the proper means of ſupporting it, very
" willingly reſigned their only child to my father's
" tuition, in expectation of his becoming in time
" heir to his valuable eſtate. It ſo happened, that
" when this adopted child had attained the age of
" ſeven years his father died; ſhortly after, his
" mother; and when he was twelve years old,
" and began to feel the advantages of his ſituation,
" I was born to cruſh his hopes.

" It could not now be expected that my father
" ſhould make the count de Poehl, for that was my
" couſin's title, his ſole heir; but really compaſ-
" ſionating his diſappointment, and being perſonally
" attached to him, he reſolved on an equal diſtri-
" bution of his property between him and myſelf,
" or whatever other children he might have; and
" to atone to him as much as poſſible for this par-
" tial loſs, by puſhing his intereſts in the world.

" The count de Poehl was a lad of diſcernment,
" and ſoon perceived the misfortune my birth
" brought on him.

" As my parents had no other child after me, I
" was the only object on which he could wreak his

" vengeance,

" vengeance, which he did in all the ways boyiſh
" malice could prompt him to, whenever he could
" ſecure himſelf from diſcovery or puniſhment.

" You will not therefore be ſurpriſed if I ſay that,
" though brought up together, nothing like friend-
" ſhip ever ſubſiſted between us, nor if I confeſs
" that the happieſt hour of my life was that in
" which I ſaw him depart from my father's to join
" the army, where a commiſſion had been pro-
" cured for him by every exertion that could raiſe
" him to more than common regard. Influence
" ſuch as his intereſts were backed by, ſoon raiſed
" him to diſtinguiſhed rank; and perſonal courage
" and conduct gained him the favour of his com-
" mander.

" An abſence of two or three years wore out all
" the ill-will I ever bore him, and the memory of
" what he had made me ſuffer was loſt in the
" glowing joy I felt on hearing anecdotes of his
" bravery, and accounts of his conſequent honours.
" I panted to tread in his ſteps, and my father in-
" dulged my inclination, and regarding whatever
" animoſities had ſubſiſted between us as the effects
" of ſituation and childiſh petulance, educated me
" in the ſame way, and with the ſame views.

" My ſucceſs was not at all inferior to his. My
" relation to him aided me in attaining ſome of the
" diſtinctions I longed for before I could otherwiſe
" have expected them, and my father ſeemed
" equally proud of his nephew and his ſon. At
" the age of eighteen, when I had made only one
" campaign, it was my fortune to be placed in a
" ſmall town newly taken from the Saxons, and to
" have committed to my more particular charge a
" family where there was a daughter only two
" years younger than myſelf, and of ſuch beauty
" and attraction, as even in my father's eyes juſ-
" tified the imprudence of my thus early marrying.

" My

" My priſoner became my wife, and was received
" by my parents as a daughter. She brought no-
" thing as a dowry but herſelf, yet ſhe was in
" my eſtimation rich, and I the happieſt mortal
" living.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

" LEAVING my wife with my father, for my " mother was now dead, and visiting home when- " ever opportunity offered, I pursued the duties of " my profession, and had the comfort of reflecting " I never returned home without bringing fresh " credit to my family.—Nothing was wanting to " complete the bright enjoyments of my situation, " but a better disposition in my cousin, the count " de Poehl, in whom increasing years seemed not " at all to have abated ill-founded resentment, and " who lost no occasion of evincing his heart-burning " against me.

" But of this only evil I disdained to complain, " even to my father: I considered, that should I " succeed in impressing him unfavourably towards " the count, my pecuniary gain and his loss would " be the consequence; and this had so illiberal and " so sordid an appearance, that I could have borne " the worst treatment he could have inflicted on " me, rather than have incurred the odium this " justifiable measure must carry with it.

" To increase my punishment, when I had been " three years in the army, he prevailed, under the " mask of friendship, to get me removed into his " regiment, where he had more frequent opportu- " tunities of harrassing me, a power which he " never omitted to exert, even on the most tri-

vial

" vial occaſions, ſtill wearing externally an ap-
" pearance of the utmoſt concern for me.

" The war, which our maſter was carrying on
" with a degree of conſtancy and ill fortune ſcarcely
" paralleled in hiſtory, obliged us, not unfrequently
" to be as active in winter as in ſpring; and it was
" during one of theſe unſeaſonable campaigns that my
" couſin, to the ſurpriſe of all who knew the ſitu-
" ation of the army, aſked and obtained leave of
" abſence for a few weeks. I was then nearly
" twenty-eight years of age, and next in command
" to him. He committed the charge of the regi-
" ment to me under the ſevereſt reſtrictions, and de-
" parted, whither I know not.

" He had been gone almoſt a month, and we
" were in a ſituation ſo critical as to call for all
" our vigilance, when one ſnowy, tempeſtuous
" night, at a very late hour, a meſſage came to
" me, that a lady with two children inquired for
" me, and were detained at an out-poſt. My
" thoughts immediately flew to my wife; but
" what could cauſe her to make me a viſit at all,
" and eſpecially at a time ſo unſeaſonable, was a
" myſtery to me, and ſuch as made me inſtantly
" diſmiſs the idea that it could be ſhe who inquired
" for me.

" Not daring to quit my poſt, I ſent a ſubaltern
" and two privates to conduct this lady and her
" children to my tent, and was preſently convinced,
" that they were no other than my wife, my ſon
" and daughter. Diſtreſs the moſt agonizing ſat on
" the countenance of the former, and for ſome mi-
" nutes her tears deprived me of all information.
" As ſoon as ſhe recovered her voice, I learnt, to
" my inexpreſſible grief and aſtoniſhment, that my
" father was dead, and that ſhe had been baniſh-
" ed from his houſe by the count de Poehl, whom
" he had conſtituted his ſole heir.

" Diſpoſed

" Diſpoſed as I was to believe evil of my couſin,
" that he ſhould ſo far have injured me, was be-
" yond the bounds of my belief; but it was true;
" and from my wife's more compoſed narrative,
" and a compariſon of it with circumſtances, I diſ-
" covered that my father, when firſt he grew ill,
" had written to the count and myſelf; that as all
" letters for the regiment were, for fear of treaſon-
" able correſpondence, delivered firſt to the com-
" manding officer, and by him diſtributed to thoſe
" they were addreſſed to, my couſin had availed
" himſelf of the opportunity of ſtopping mine; that
" he had remitted his authority to me for the pur-
" poſe of keeping me with the army; had then
" haſtened to my father, whom he found ſcarcely
" alive, and on whom he had prevailed, by the
" groſſeſt falſities, which my innocent diſregard
" of his letter tended to confirm, entirely to diſin-
" herit me. He had then taken poſſeſſion of every
" thing, had turned my wife, nearly ready to
" lie-in, and my children, out of doors, and had
" forced her to undertake a journey of two hun-
" dred miles in the depth of winter, as the only
" chance ſhe had for eſcaping periſhing for
" want.

" Grieved and enraged at the recital of ſuch fla-
" grant injuſtice, as ſoon as I had diſpoſed the un-
" happy wanderers in my tent, and procured them
" the few comforts our ſituation afforded, I ſought
" the General, and without reſerve laying the
" whole matter before him, I begged him to pro-
" cure me an audience of his majeſty, and a
" hearing of my wrongs. But I applied to a per-
" ſon very little inclined to aſſiſt me. He was, I
" found a ſworn friend to my couſin, and more
" diſpoſed to rejoice at the ſucceſs of his villainy,
" which, as he himſelf was a needy extravagant
" man, he, perhaps, hoped to profit by, than to do

me

" me either an act of friendſhip or juſtice. Conſe-
" quently, all the memorials I attempted to convey
" to the royal hand were detained in their paſſage,
" and I believe the great Frederic never knew the
" violation of juſtice that diſgraced this epoch of
" his reign.

" My couſin extended his abſence to more than
" three months, during which time my family
" were ſuffering every hardſhip of my ſituation,
" and I was waiting impatiently for the moment
" whenI might perſonally inſiſt on the reſtitution of
" my rights. Foreſeeing that ſome danger await-
" ed him on his return, he prudently engaged the
" general to uſe his influence with the king, to get a
" declaration from him, that he would hear no
" complaints againſt ſuperior officers while we were
" encamped, but that the adjuſtment of all grie-
" vances ſhould be poſtponed till his return to Ber-
" lin. Accordingly I prepared to refer my caſe to
" the courts of juſtice there, and ſent a ſtate of it to
" ſuch as I thought I could engage to defend my
" rights; but no one ſeemed inclined to enter the
" liſts for me againſt the count de Poehl, whom,
" having now riſen high in the king's favour, and
" being ſuppoſed in his moſt intimate confidence, it
" was dangerous even to ſpeak againſt.

" When he had ſecured himſelf to the utmoſt of
" his prudence, he had the audacity to return to the
" army; and I no ſooner ſaw him, than I openly
" taxed him with his villainy, and inſiſted on his
" conſenting to lay the matter before the king.
" The conſequence of this I might have foreſeen.
" I was put under an arreſt for having uſed diſre-
" ſpectful language to my colonel, and confined to
" my tent for a week: an indignity I had never
" yet ſuffered. This experience taught me the
" prudence of remaining paſſive for the preſent,

" and

" and ſtill hoping the event of the king's return to " Berlin, I ſubmitted in ſilence.

" The narrowneſs of my finances, which now " conſiſted only of my pay, and the particular in- " conveniencies to which a camp is ſubject, expoſed " my wife to the utmoſt hardſhip at a time when " every indulgence was no more than her circum- " ſtances made neceſſary. A tent was her lying- " in chamber, and not the leaſt delicacy of food or " attendance was to be procured for her; yet ſhe " ſtruggled through all her difficulties, and wore a " cheerful countenance whenever I approached " her.

" Early in the ſpring we decamped, and I was " ſent forward with a detachment of our regiment " to a village in Bohemia, which had ſurrendered " to the king of Pruſſia; but in the neighbourhood " of which was a poſt occupied by the enemy, " ſtrongly fortified, and obſtinately defended. I " ſet forward gladly on this expedition, cheered " with the proſpect of finding a comfortable abode " for my family, and with the hope that now an " opportunity might offer of ſignalizing myſelf and " gaining the attention of his majeſty, who was ever " equally diſpoſed to eſteem and recompenſe the " conduct of his generals, the bravery of his officers, " or the perſonal valour of the meaneſt private.

" The count de Poehl and myſelf had long ceaſed " to be on ſpeaking terms. He had ſhame enough " about him to look confounded whenever I came " in his way, and his orders to me were uniformly " delivered in writing. On this occaſion they were " remarkably ſtrict, and yet ſo vague, that while " they left nothing to my diſcretion, they expoſed " me to the utmoſt hazard of erring: they com- " manded me to repair with the detachment to the " village I have before ſpoken of, there to remain " till he joined me. The object of the march was

" to

" to prevent a conſiderable body of the enemy,
" then known to be on their way, from relieving the
" garriſon: I was on no account to ſuffer their junc-
" tion; but I was not, on pain of being puniſhed
" for diſobedience of others, either to make any at-
" tack on the fortifications, or to hazard an action
" with the relief. To theſe orders, clear enough
" in themſelves, though perhaps not ſo eaſy to ex-
" ecute, the count added, that I might depend on
" his coming up with me before two o'clock in the
" afternoon of the day after that on which we were
" expected to reach the village. Fearing I might
" be drawn into an unpleaſant dilemma, and know-
" ing I never could be ſafe enough from cenſure, when
" I had to deal with ſuch a man as the count, I ven-
" tured in a billet to aſk what, in caſe any accident
" prevented his joining me as he deſigned, I was to
" do. The anſwer I received was, that no acci-
" dent could prevent his joining me, and that far-
" ther orders were ſuperfluous, as I might rely on
" his punctuality."

CHAP. XIV.

" BUT half ſatisfied, I ſet out, taking my fami-
" mily with me, in hopes of fixing them in the
" village: this I did to my ſatisfaction on the day
" of our arrival, and the next morning we had in-
" telligence, that the relief was coming up by forced
" marches, having heard that the Count de Poehl
" was to join us at noon. From within the gari-
" ſon I alſo learned that an attack made *before* this
" re-inforcement arrived, would be attended with
" certain ſucceſs, as the men, worn out with long
" and ſevere duty, and now elated with the proſ-
" pect of relief, were entirely off their guard;
" but adhering ſtrictly to my written orders, I
" dared not ſtir a finger, had the ſalvation of the
" whole weſtern empire depended on it.

" Scouts came in every hour with news that
" made us aſhamed of the inactivity we were com-
" pelled to; and ſo evident was the advantage now
" preſented to us, that I began ſeriouſly to appre-
" hend that it would be impoſſible to reſtrain the
" ardour of the men.

" With great difficulty and the utmoſt perſua-
" ſion I kept them quite till two o'clock, at which
" time he knew the relief was within three hours,
" march of us: the garriſon ſeemed totally care-
" leſs, and not a man of the Count de Poehl's was
" in ſight. A complete hour I waited; and then

" imagining

" imagining ſome unforeſeen accident had detained
" them, and that I really ſhould *deſerve* cenſure
" for loſing ſo fair an opportunity. I gave way to
" the impetuoſity of the men, made a ſudden at-
" tack on the enemy's outworks, carried them,
" and, ſword in hand, led the way to ſcale a wall
" before us. We ſucceeded in this attempt, and
" after a ſharp conteſt of about an hour and half,
" in which I got ſeverely wounded, the garriſon
" ſurrendered, and I had the pleaſure of taking
" poſſeſſion of this important poſt in the name of
" the King of Pruſſia.

" We had ſcarcely ſecured the priſoners, when
" the relief appeared in ſight; they were ignorant
" of the capture of the place till galled by the guns
" from it. Panic ſtruck, they halted, and ſeemed
" entirely at a loſs. I directed a *ſortie* to
" be made, and they preſently retreated; the
" Count de Poehl's van coming up juſt in time to
" ſee the duſt they cauſed in their flight.

" Malice herſelf, I thought, could not affix any
" cenſure to what I had done: I had punctually
" fulfilled my orders, and had accompliſhed a pur-
" poſe of the firſt conſequence, as had the junc-
" tion been formed between the garriſon and the re-
" lief, the whole of our army in its paſſage acroſs
" the country was expoſed to a moſt galling can-
" nonade; and I knew it had been determined in
" council, that till this place was reduced, nothing
" effectual could be done. But my fiend-like cou-
" ſin, in his inexhauſtible invention, found cauſe of
" complaint againſt me. By quitting my ſtation
" he alleged that, however I had proved my
" courage, and riſked the lives of the men I was
" intruſted with, I had done no efficient ſervice,
" as the reinforcement we had put to flight had im-
" mediately thrown up works, and intrenched
" themſelves in our road only two miles farther
" off;

" off; and that having ſent to their main army
" an account of what had befallen the garriſon,
" ſupplies were inceſſantly ſent off to them. Be-
" ſide this diminution of my praiſe, he aſſerted
" that had I not officiouſly anticipated my orders,
" I ſhould have fallen in with a body of three thou-
" ſand Auſtrians, whom ſickneſs and want of pro-
" viſions had reduced to ſuch a ſtate, that they
" were believed to have thrown themſelves in our
" way out of mere deſperation.

" In anſwer to theſe calumnies, I could only
" refer to what I had achieved, and leave it to the
" judgment of impartial perſons to decide, whe-
" ther I could be employed in two places at once;
" whether it was to be expected, that I ſhould
" ſeize an advantage, it could not be proved I had
" ever heard of it till it was paſt; and which was
" the moſt important ſervice, the getting poſſeſ-
" ſion of a poſt the King himſelf had declared in-
" diſpenſably neceſſary to his progreſs, or the
" making three thouſand priſoners of men ſinking
" into the grave, and to whom all the proviſions
" we could have have procured would ſcarcely
" have furniſhed ſubſiſtence for a day?

" I ſhould weary you with my detail, were I to
" enumerate half the mortifications I ſuffered dur-
" ing a month that our regiment was quartered
" here: I not only was diſappointed of all reward
" and all attention from his Majeſty, but reduced,
" in every company where I wiſhed for credit, to
" vindicate my conduct and defend myſelf, as if
" before a court-martial. At length, driven almoſt
" to diſtraction by the repeated ill-treatment my
" couſin loaded me with, and chance affording me
" an opportunity of expreſſing my ſenſe of it to
" his face, I inſiſted on having my conduct regularly
" inquired into. He laughed at my reſentment,
" and ſo far provoked me, that I unheſitatingly told
" him,

" him, he was a robber and an aſſaſſin, at the
" ſame time, in the unguarded heat of anger,
" half-unſheathing my ſword. Here my impru-
" dence had given him the advantage of me. I
" was unaccompanied, he had a friend with him.
" The matter was immediately reported to the
" General: it was, without a word by way of
" reaſon aſſigned, buzzed abroad that I had at-
" tempted to run my Colonel through the body,
" and I was put under an arreſt.

" There was no danger now in granting me the
" military form of juſtice. Teſtimonials of my
" fault were carried to the King, and he, accord-
" ing to the ſeverity of his diſcipline, ordered me
" to be reduced to the ranks during his pleaſure.
" I had no way of helping myſelf, for my wife
" and children were impediments to my doing
" whatever a ſenſe of injury might have prompted
" me to, and I was forced to abide the ungrateful
" ſtorm of regal diſpleaſure, as long as it ſhould
" laſt, ſtill hoping great things at the concluſion of
" the campaign, when I doubted not I ſhould be
" able to ſtate my grievances, and proſecute my
" rights ſo as to get, at leaſt, a *hearing* from his
" Majeſty.

CHAP. XXV.

"My diſtreſſes were now very great, and want of money not the leaſt of them: but in a ſhort time the exceſs of the evil I ſmarted under ſeemed to promiſe a cure of it. Many of the officers and ſubalterns of our regiment, not interfering in the perſonal quarrel between the Count and myſelf, but convinced that my ſervices had met with a return they by no means deſerved, intereſted themſelves for me, and ſtirred in my cauſe. Facts were ſtated anew to his Majeſty: I was reſtored to my rank. My couſin was given to underſtand that his conduct was cenſurable, and we were mutually required to apologize. Convinced that I had acted unjuſtifiably in ſuffering private circumſtances to get the better of reſpect to my ſuperior officer, I without murmuring obeyed, and my couſin thought proper not only to do as commanded, but took ſome pains to convince me that he was more my friend than I believed, and that his harſhneſs often proceeded from fear leſt the nearneſs of our conſanguinity might induce a ſuſpicion in others that he was more lenient to me than to the reſt: nay, in this conference he hinted at the private cauſe of our animoſity, and ſeemed perfectly content

tent that the laws of Pruſſia ſhould decide between us.

"My heart was lightened: I began to think leſs unfavourably of the Count de Poehl; and I returned to my wife with glad tidings. I thought ſhe was leſs rejoiced than ſhe ſhould have been, and I was grieved when I fancied her ſpirit was now irrecoverably borne down by mortification and anxiety. How greatly I miſtook the cauſe of her dejection, a few days ſhewed.

"My couſin after our treaty of amity, had profeſſed himſelf deſirous of living on ſuch terms as became our ſituations, and was now our frequent viſitor. He poſſeſſed the power of pleaſing beyond any man I ever knew, and his abilities to confer benefits gaining him attention every where, he was generally liked where the deep malice of his character did not unveil itſelf. Injured as we had been by him, I thought I perceived my wife liſtened with too ready an ear to his proffered friendſhip. I gave her an hint to beware of him. She juſtified her conduct to my ſatisfaction, by pleading, that concern for her children's intereſts made her ſmother her reſentment. But ſhe deceived me. She had liſtened not only to the language of friendſhip, but of love; and a very ſhort period convinced me, that the Count de Poehl had poſſeſſion of her heart and perſon.

"It was on his part a paſſion very different from love that had actuated my inſidious relation. It was ſolely a deſire of being revenged on me. The injury was entirely levelled at me; and as ſoon as the world was thoroughly aware of my diſgrace, when he had ſo far prevailed on her as to make her deſert her family, and live openly with him, rioting in all the luxury of her ſituation, he on a ſudden ſtripped her of all that had bribed her virtue,

virtue, and with an insulting message sent her back to me.

"The distresses of my mind had worn my constitution; and on this completion of them, her abandoning me, I fell into a violent fever, from which my intellects were scarcely cleared when she returned penitent and wretched. I refused to receive her, and was resolute in my refusal, till convinced that some act of desperation on her part would be the consequence. Religion and humanity then pleaded for her; and such was her sense of her error, that I found all the comfort I could bestow on her, and all the tenderness I could use, too little. She fell into a deep melancholy, and was perceptibly hastening to her grave.

"In hopes of aiding the restoration of her peace by change of life, and by quitting whatever might remind her of our misfortunes, I sold my commission, and bought this house and its little dependencies. I had the comfort of seeing her once more tranquil. The cares of her family, which our narrow circumstances threw entirely on ourselves, occupied her thoughts; and though her contrition never relaxed, and her life was one continued scene of submission and repentance, her gratitude for my conduct dressed her countenance in placid smiles, and while she was sedulously fitting herself for another world, she fulfilled with the utmost diligence her duties in this.

"Thus we lived, till about ten years ago, when it pleased Heaven to call its penitent to itself, leaving me of all our issue, only this daughter surviving.—Here have I lived in peace and tranquillity ever since, undisturbed, except by our recent misfortunes, the death of a hopeful young man, who had married my daughter, and the almost immediate loss of her child: but Provi-

dence fits our minds and our tempers to our trials. The calamities of this world at one time nearly overwhelmed me, becauſe on this world only all my views were fixed; now that they are directed higher, what I meet with here, I conſider only as the accidents of a journey near its concluſion."

Here ceaſed the Baron, and Caſimir, on whom not a word was loſt, when he ſaw himſelf ſo ſurpaſſed in affliction, and ſo much outdone in the toleration of it, felt himſelf aſhamed of his weakneſs: he had not lived long enough to know that what, for his own ſake, it was right he ſhould be taught to conſider as puſillanimity, was, in truth but nature. The ſorrows of the heart are not more various in their cauſes than effects, and could we teach youth to bear them with the ſteadineſs of old age, though we might attain ſomewhat of Spartan conſtancy, what would become of all the fine emotions of the ſoul, and where ſhould we look for aught that is amiable in human weakneſs?

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

"AND what," ſaid Caſimir, when he had ſomewhat recovered himſelf, "has been the fate of the Count de Poehl? Have you ſuffered him, uninterrupted, to enjoy the ſweets of ſuch treachery?"

"While I had ſpirit to have purſued my claim," replied the Baron, "all means of aſſerting it were denied me. The innumerable difficulties I had to encounter, the want of evidence to prove the fraudulent means by which he obtained a will in his favour, and the little chance I ſtood againſt ſo popular a character, deterred me from ſeeking juſtice, and misfortune ſoon taught me that I ſhould make an ill exchange of the quiet I was ſinking into, for even the whole of what I ſought for. In ſhort deſpair produced content. The Count de Poehl died a few years ago, in a ſituation of mind and body that made even me pity him when I heard of it. He had bequeathed all his property to a natural ſon, now high in eſtimation at the German court. Remorſe ſeizing him on his death-bed, when he had no longer power to alter his will, he called his ſon to him, and enjoined him

ſtrictly to ſeek what remained of my family, and to make them reſtitution: but the young man ſeems more inclined to follow the *example* than the *precept* of his father, and has conſequently taken no notice of us."

A look of indignation, a look that for a moment ſeemed to aſk Heaven where was its juſtice, burſt from the contorted features of Colonel Fliders, not unobſerved by the Baron. Again he reſumed his exhortation, and convinced the novice in affliction, that impatience is the child of inexperience.—"Watch but the courſe of this world," ſaid he, "as long as I have done, and you will ſee, that however our affairs deviate from the path of our ſublunary intereſts, all comes right in the end. Our loſſes are purchaſes; for we exchange temporary bleſſings for thoſe more valuable and more permanent, that are attached to our minds. I feel every hour the benefit of my misfortunes. I can look on the paſt without regret, and to the future with hope and confidence; whereas, were I now in the poſſeſſion of thoſe things I once fondly fancied I had a preſcriptive right to, my views would perhaps be ſtill confined to this world, and I ſhould regret that I muſt ſoon quit it. This little ſpot of ground produces every thing neceſſary to my ſubſiſtence, and allows me an overplus for external wants. In my daughter I have all the comforts a parent can know; and could I but ſecure the reverſion of my peace and enjoyments to her, I could joyfully repeat the *Nunc dimittis*, and lie down in my grave content."

The re-animated Fliders had felt at once ſentiments of love and admiration for his new friend, and now attached to him by the ſtrongeſt ties of ſympathy, he ſeemed to have found his father.—

Concealing

Concealing only the name of his wife's family, he returned the old man's confidence by a recital of his own brief diſtreſſes, and promiſed to be his willing diſciple, if he would inſtruct him to overcome them.—Under ſuch circumſtances, ſubmiſſion was the only medicine; but the authority of the phyſician gave energy to it, and it produced in the patient's mind, that calmneſs which was previouſly neceſſary to his conſidering what courſe he ſhould take.

Anxious to learn what had been the conſequence of his quitting home, and tenderly careful of his mother's peace, he, on the third day after his departure, took courage, and ventured within a mile of her houſe, from whence he ſent a meſſenger to her, with whom ſhe returned to him. He learnt that Maria had immediately ſet out for Vienna, and was taught to believe that ſhe had expreſſed nothing but the utmoſt contempt and indignation towards him. Not a ſyllable was ſaid of a letter ſhe had left for him, complaining of her hard fate, and calling on juſtice to prove her guilty, or acquit her. Nothing tranſpired of the grief ſhe had expreſſed, by more than words, on being thus cruelly ſeparated from her infant Caſimir. Her piety and reſignation were paſſed over in worſe than ſilence, and ſhe was portrayed to her ſorrowing huſband as a creature not deſerving his ſorrow; every argument againſt her being enforced by a reference to the conſummate hypocriſy ſhe had for ſo long practiſed.

When this ſubject was, if not *exhauſted*, purſued as long as was neceſſary, this *affectionate* mother uſed her eloquence on that point, to which all this was but a prelude. She began earneſtly to intreat her darling ſon to return home—to bring his

child back, and let her have the comfort of their ſociety; but here Colonel Fliders was deaf to her entreaties. He told Madame ſhe knew little how the heart of a huſband was formed, if ſhe imagined it could find peace in the haunts of a faithleſs wife. —"Had Maria died," ſaid he, relapſing into all his tenderneſs, "my footſteps ſhould never have ſtrayed from her grave. Every ſpot I had ever ſeen her on, would have been irreſiſtibly endeared to me; but now that I have indeed loſt her, never to regain her, without even the hope that eternity may again unite us, to love whatever reminds me of her, would be a weakneſs even *my* grief diſdains."

Still anxious to prevail, and not deſpairing, Madame Fliders now drew forth her intelligence reſpecting Secretary Kluber's dangerous ſituation, and with a ſpirit that did but farther alienate Caſimir from her, called on him in his prudence to rejoice that he had eſcaped being involved in family ruin. At firſt he would not believe her information: he had been once ſo deceived, and was now cautious; but here ſhe had incontrovertible evidence, and ſhe carried her point in convincing him, yet to no purpoſe—for, after all ſhe could ſay, ſhe found him much more diſpoſed to have aſcended the block, hand in hand with his dear Maria, guilty only by having attached himſelf to her, than to bear the load of miſery he ſaw muſt oppreſs him through a tedious exiſtence. After a ſtay of a few hours, during which he ſteadily rejected his mother's offer to leave her own home for any thing he might prefer, and poſitively refuſed to let her know whither he had retreated, he prevailed on her to quit him, promiſing her, at the ſame time, that his diſtreſſes ſhould never make him negligent of her; and that he would, at ſtated times, ſee her.

her where they had then met. She, when ſhe reached home, ſent him what his neceſſities required; he waited only for them, and returned to his new friends, not a ſtep nearer obtaining peace than when he left them, but with an increaſe of melancholy.

In a few weeks his ſorrows had ſettled into a ſyſtem. He viſited his mother almoſt daily, the diſtance between them, on the ſtraight road, being only four miles. He aſſiſted the Baron de Greuſs in the cultivation of his garden, and found, in his ſociety, a ſpecies of comfort he had never looked for. In ſhort, he was become tolerably placid; and, by every poſſible means having baniſhed his wife from his remembrance, he could juſt keep from ſinking under his affliction, when his attention was called on by another, but far leſs pungent, cauſe of diſtreſs.

The ſpirit of his regiment had not been repreſſed by the ſevere treatment their complaints had met with, and, during Colonel Fliders's abſence, it had broke out in a ſtill leſs juſtifiable manner. The influence of thoſe who oppreſſed them, got the better of their rights, and procured only vengeance on their reſentment. Without inquiry, or diſcrimination, the officers were all caſhiered, and the men diſperſed, in ſmall bodies, amongſt other regiments.

It was to hear this news, that deprived him of his military rank and pay, that Colonel Fliders was called on.—He liſtened to it as a man who had ſtood a ſeverer ſhock, but yet felt this. His own conſcience acquitting him, he might boldly have remonſtrated againſt this indiſcriminating ſeverity; but his ſpirit was broke: he diſdained ſeeking favour, by deſerting his party while they

were juſtified, though not in the means, yet in the end they purſued, and he determined to ſhare their fate, unſeduced by an overture made to him when the Royal diſpleaſure was finally announced, that, "on proper application, his ſervices would obtain him not only a hearing, but a diſtinction." He replied indignantly, that, "had an impartial hearing been allowed his friends, before their paſſions were rouſed by the contempt their requeſt met with, the Emperor would have kept ſome good ſervants in his obedience; but, he believed, he ſpoke the language of all, when he aſſerted it was now too late to recall any one of them."

This untoward buſineſs concluded, and almoſt all connection between Caſimir Fliders and the world cut off, at an age when few young men have entered on its active ſtage, he turned his thoughts to retirement and books, remained the Baron's gueſt a few months, and then, finding his mind much ſtrengthened, he formed a deſign of ſettling in his neighbourhood, and gratifying his mother in her wiſh to live with him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

IT is now time to look towards the other ſufferer, by a crafty, ſhort-ſighted woman's crooked arts. The wretched Maria having poured out her ſorrows in language, that, had it reached her huſband, would probably have convinced his mind, unprejudiced, but in her favour, that ſhe was innocent, departed inſtantly for Vienna, careleſs as to what became of her on her journey; and now regardleſs of thoſe conveniencies and ſecurities, that when ſhe wiſhed to tear herſelf from *fond* Caſimir, ſhe had deemed indiſpenſably neceſſary to her getting home. By what means ſhe ſcarcely knew, ſhe reached Vienna, and her father's houſe, in ſafety; and all her misfortunes would have been read in her firſt appearance, had there been any one to attend to them; but deſolation marked the houſe; it was abandoned, and nobody could be found to tell its tale. Maria, rouſed by wonder, recollected a friend in the neighbourhood to whom ſhe could apply, imagining nothing worſe than that the ſervants were to the laſt degree negligent in the abſence of their maſter: but far other tidings met her ear. The friend ſhe had reſorted to,

conſulting only his own ſafety, refuſed admiſſion to the daughter of the fallen and convicted Secretary. He would not even be ſeen ſpeaking to her; but roughly ſent out this intelligence, that, if ſhe wiſhed to ſee her father, any one would direct her to the ſtate-priſon.

Thither, having given her driver no other direction than, "O! take me to my father," ſhe inſtantly repaired, with difficulty got acceſs to him, and her ſenſes ſerving her only till ſhe ſaw him, ſhe threw herſelf into his arms, to all appearance a corpſe. She recovered to a ſtate bordering on diſtraction, and having an alternative given her, either to abandon him for ever, or ſhare his fate, her diſtreſſes, and her piety, rendered the latter far the more eligible; and ſuppreſſing every mention of her own ſorrows, ſhe felt a comfort in ſharing his beyond what ſhe thought the univerſe could beſtow. He, a man entirely of this world, was waiting his ſentence in careleſs deſperation, and ſeeing no means of extricating himſelf, he was not inclined, by new attempts, to provoke a ſpeedy fate. The ſight of his daughter rather diſturbed than gratified him, till after a few days, when he began to feel comfort in her ſociety, and natural affection began to whiſper to him, that there was ſomething yet he wiſhed to live for; ſomething, that it would coſt even the heart of a deep politician to part with. He urged her to ſave herſelf by leaving him; but it required little more than obſervation to perceive the means would fail of the end. He ſaw her dying ſolely, as he believed with grief on his account, and he began to repent his treaſon: perhaps it was his *unſucceſsful* treaſon he repented.

Here

Here, without hope of eſcape or pardon, let us leave the guilty and the innocent ſufferer, and draw a veil over a cataſtrophe that it is fitter to imagine than deſcribe.

Madame Fliders had now brought her plan very nearly to perfection. She had, in hopes of advancing her ſon, in effect married him. Perceiving the proſpect changed, ſhe had changed her meaſures, and unmarried him. Her great object, the ſafety of Colonel Fliders, amidſt the devouring whirlwind of regal vengeance, ſhe had accompliſhed: the ſtorm had paſſed by him without touching him. That his perſon was ſafe at the expence of what was far dearer to an intellectual being, ſhe regarded not; nor could all the arguments of the ableſt reaſoner have convinced her, that a premature death would have been, in Caſimir's opinion, preferable to the lingering miſery ſhe was entailing on him. She was at firſt grieved to ſee him dejected; but truſting to the volatility of a young mind, ſhe hoped the ſun of cheerfulneſs would, after a little while, gladden his countenance again. She was impatient for the change, and ſhe was diſappointed. She tried a new ſcheme, that of informing him Maria was dead; but it produced an effect rather contrary to her wiſhes. The placid melancholy he ſunk into, was as diſtreſſing to her fondneſs as his more violent grief; and not at all aware how he ſtruggled for a victory over himſelf, ſhe gave him and herſelf up as victims to ſorrow; and ſecretly curſing all the arts we had made uſe of, though far too proud to confute them, ſhe ſuffered her uneaſineſs to overcome all her hopes, and fell a prey to her own folly, juſt when her ſon was conſulting her gratification.

He

He was abſent from her when ſhe was attacked by thoſe ſymptoms that convinced her ſhe had not many hours of life remaining. Then, and not till then, *real* remorſe of conſcience ſtruck her, and ſhe employed a portion of this ſhort ſpace in writing a letter for him, revealing the whole of her duplicity. This important paper, he not being returned, ſhe, at the moment of her death, committed to the care of her confeſſor, to be delivered to her ſon. The holy man promiſed the moſt ſcrupulous obſervance of her injunction; but well-knowing that he had often acted not only as her *ſpiritual* but *temporal* adviſer, he choſe firſt to judge how far he was concerned in what he had to carry. The letter was too fully explanatory; it attributed more *active* ſervice to him than his *modeſty* could endure to have recorded: he therefore pocketed the intelligence; and, conſequently Caſimir mourned for his deceaſed mother as for an invaluable parent.

The privation of all other connection ſeemed now to impel him irreſiſtibly towards the Baron de Greufs and the amiable Adeline, his daughter, who, whenever a new ſtroke of fortune overtook their gueſt, were prepared to ward it from him by freſh exertions of kindneſs; and now all their cares were called on, for Caſimir, whoſe boy was become his only relative, was inconſolable under his loſſes.

Again the Baron's friendſhip offered a prop to his affliction; and his aſſiduities ſoothed it. A decent time allowed to grief, he urged Colonel Fliders to an inveſtigation of his property, and a ſettlement of his mother's affairs, which, demands pouring in from all quarters, as ſoon as her death

was

was known, intimated to be in no regular order.

They ſpoke no more than truth; for their final adjuſtment proved all ſhe had left little more than enough to diſcharge her debts. Her ſon now began to look where he and his infant were to ſubſiſt. How, he ſcarcely knew; but he felt himſelf on a ſudden dwindled into poverty; and into poverty of the loweſt kind muſt he have ſunk, had it not been for the ſmall farm he had purchaſed as a retreat for Maria, and which, till now, he had neglected. He ſold it, and purchaſed a ſmall demeſne adjoining the baron's. It had no houſe on it; but that was no objection, as the hoſpitable De Greufs would not hear of ſeparation. Well acquainted with the feelings of a generous mind, he ſuffered his friend to relieve himſelf from the idea of dependence, or obligation, by contributing his ſhare towards their ſmall expences; and thus was this unfortunate outcaſt, from his natural ſituation, ingrafted into a family, to which diſtreſs, that would have made a leſs benevolent heart cloſe againſt him, was his only recommendation, and paſſport.

No neceſſity, even on the death of his mother, could force him to re-enter the houſe where he had witneſſed the murder of his peace. The baron, unequal as he was to fatigue of any kind, here ſtepped forward to ſave his wounded mind from galling, and adjuſted all Madame Fliders's affairs, the embarraſſment of which left nothing to her ſon but uſeleſs papers, and letters, he never had the courage to examinine. Unhappy, ill-fated Caſimir! had not thy heart, too tenderly balanced to admit a grain of affliction more, ſhrunk from the painful taſk of reviewing thy ſad inheritance,

thou would'ſt there have found a teſtimonial of thy Maria's innocence, written by her own hand when departing into baniſhment: thy incredulity could not have ſtood the force of her words, and thou wouldſt at leaſt have enjoyed, in anticipation, the bliſs of meeting her pure ſpirit in a world even thy tenderneſs could ſcarce hope ſhe would be admitted to.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

A YEAR had ſcrce revolved ſince the death of his mother; and Caſimir had juſt begun to return the unremitted kindneſs of De Greuſs and Adeline, by ſhewing the good effect of it on his mind, when the hand of death robbed him, after a ſhort warning, of his hoſpitable, his beloved, his reverend friend, who, as if his life had been prolonged only for the comfort of his unfortunate gueſt, employed almoſt the whole of that time he did not devote to religious exerciſes in holding out to him freſh encouragement to perſevere in a ſteady courſe of hope and patience. Well aware of his own approaching end, and welcoming it with all the ardour of pious confidence, he was himſelf the beſt example poſſible how his precepts might be practiſed; and tenderly requeſting Caſimir to protect the helpleſs ſtate of his afflicted Adeline, he expired, without a groan, on the boſom of him he had ſo ably comforted.

A ſon could not have felt ſincerer ſorrow for the death of the beſt father; a brother could not more have ſympathiſed in a ſiſter's grief, than did this accidental

cidental inmate of the baron's family, when the heavy blow lighted on them. In the agony of his mind, Caſimir forgot all his newly-learnt philoſophy: he would have thrown himſelf into the grave of his friend; he wept, he groaned, he was overwhelmed with affliction; till ſeeing how much poor Adeline ſtood in need of comfort, and yet retaining in his boſom the ſpirit of a man, though depreſſed by almoſt all the ſorrows of humanity, he checked his own ſenſibility to ſooth her's. She, too grateful not to ſtrive to promote the good he intended her, exerted more fortitude that ſhe thought ſhe poſſeſſed, and thus, by endeavouring to cheer each other, the mourners were themſelves cheered.

As ſoon as the abatement of his grief allowed Caſimir to recollect what had paſſed, the baron's recommendation of his daughter to his care roſe forcibly to his remembrance. The injunction was brief, it contained only the words, *protect my Adeline*; but a volume of precept might have been more eaſily complied with under his circumſtances. Decorum did not admit even of his remaining longer than was neceſſary where he was; but how was he to ſeek another habitation? How tear his child, who regarded Adeline as his mother, from her? Caſimir's heart recoiled at the idea of thus puniſhing her; but when he reflected how far ſhort ſuch prudence fell of the Baron's intention and requeſt, he felt more inclined to riſk every conſequence of abiding by his charge than to deſert her: yet ſtill he was perplexed; their ſituation was aukward; it did not ſpeak for itſelf; but it ſeemed remedileſs. Convinced it was ſo, and ſatisfied of his own integrity, he at laſt reſolved to fulfil his deceaſed friend's injunction, by remaining where he was; at leaſt,

till

till he could find better protection for Adeline, and leave her in peace.

His companion had not imbibed any of the prejudices, or falſe notions, the world teaches. She looked on Caſimir as her father's repreſentative. She entertained the higheſt perſonal reſpect for him; and there was ſomething in his ſorrows that commanded reverence, and would have been powerful enough to have checked any warmer paſſion than the ſincereſt friendſhip. Innocent as the babe ſhe had foſtered, ſhe was ignorant that virtue can be expoſed to calumny; and too humble to fancy herſelf at all capable of attracting notice, ſhe felt not one unquiet moment on Caſimir's account. Beſides, the place they lived in was ſo nearly ſolitary, that the world ſeemed to have no controul over it. Little did ſhe know that objects however ſmall may be comparatively great, and that privacy is more rationally to be ſought in a crowd than in a deſart.

There lived about two miles from them a pariſh prieſt, a man of no reſpectable character, but who was feared amongſt his flock, partly on the credit, of an authoritative aſpect, and partly becauſe he was known to poſſeſs talents and propenſities adapted to miſchief. This man, indigent and crafty, took an early opportunity, after the death of the baron, to hint to Caſimir the impropriety of the ſcheme of life he and Adeline ſeemed ſettling into. The intimation was diſtreſſing; and Caſimir, after begging him not to make Adeline uneaſy by mentioning the ſubject to her, promiſed to revolve it in his mind, and to ſeek ſome means of averting the evil pointed out.

He failed not in the performance of his promiſe. The hours that ſhould have been dedicated to reſt, he ſpent in endeavouring to reconcile the militating

duties

duties he had to diſcharge. Every native ſentiment of his boſom roſe againſt the idea of deſerting his charge: tenderneſs for that charge forced him to ruminate on a ſeparation, a reſource, not leſs oppoſed by ſocial, than by ſelfiſh principles.—Adeline was a companion, in whoſe converſation he found pleaſure: ſhe was, beſides, the protectreſs of his child's helpleſs ſtate; and what muſt be the conſequence of their dividing? He muſt not only forego the only ſociety he was at all inclined to, and either ſink into uninterrupted ſolitude, or again mix with a world he was diſguſted with; but he muſt requite Adeline's ſpontaneous goodneſs to the child, and repay his obligations to her father, by giving her the greateſt pain he could inflict; for the parent was too ſtrong in his nature, to allow his recollecting that he might have departed, ſtill leaving young Caſimir to her care.

In the midſt of his ruminations, a thought darted acroſs his mind, without being entertained for a moment——"What! if I were to marry Adeline, "now that unhappy Maria is no more?"—His harrowed ſoul would not bear a repetition of the queſtion: he ſtarted, and ſeemed as if deſirous to get away from himſelf.

But ſtill this only remaining way of ſatisfying all claims on prudence and conſcience would obtrude itſelf, till at length it grew familiar, and he could contend with the idea, always coming off victorious and diſmiſſing it, never to return again. Yet return it would, and did with added force on its ſide, ſtrengthened by the conviction it brought with it, that it offered the only means that were not inadequate to the end ſought for.

He now began to mark the conduct of Adeline, wiſhing to diſcover by obſervation, that might not attract her notice, whether it was a meaſure ſhe would

would approve. The artleſſneſs of her character needed little penetration to develope it; but there was nothing to be extracted from any part of her deportment, and Caſimir could only logically infer, that the friendſhip ſhe had evinced, would, without much difficulty, be improved into love.

This firſt important ſtep, of making a reſolution, being overcome, he wiſhed for a more certain aſſurance of Maria's death than he had yet received, as it reſted entirely on his mother's information, which had once miſled him. He, therefore, recolſecting Madame Fliders's old friend and correſpondent at Vienna, wrote to her, requeſting to learn the fate of Maria Kluber.

It ſo happened, that Madame Fliders, in her maze of cunning, had made uſe of this friend to aid her in her attempt to recall her ſon home. She had hit on the expedient of aſſerting that Maria was dead; but prudently aſking herſelf whether her ſon would rely on her information, and how, in caſe he was ſceptical, ſhe was to prove it true, ſhe had given this uſeful correſpondent to underſtand, that her ſon had entertained a paſſion for Maria Kluber, of which, now that the family were ruined, ſhe wiſhed to cure him. That it was with this view ſhe had ſuffered Maria to return to Vienna; but that meaſure turning out inefficacious, ſhe had no way left but to convince him of her deceaſe. For this purpoſe, ſhe begged her friend to write the intelligence, which, at a proper time, ſhe would make uſe of.

The letter came, and ſo fully anſwered Madame's expectations, that it was not at all clear to her, whether Maria was living or dead. But there had been no neceſſity for producing it. He, to whom Maria's heart was a far greater loſs than her perſon,

perſon, acquieſced in the aſſertion, without examining the evidence of it; and ſeeming to have outlived all care or curioſity, and to have no farther intereſt in aught of this world's occurrences, he gave a ſigh to the memory of his alienated wife, and, bidding her ſpirit reſt in peace, ſunk into increaſed melancholy.

On his applying to the writer of this letter, on the ſubject of Maria's death, ſhe, either prompted by truth, or not caring to unſay what ſhe ſuppoſed he knew ſhe had ſaid, repeated her aſſertion; and it was evidence that he did not ſcruple to admit. Conſidering himſelf, therefore, as again not only *legally* but *conſcientiouſly* free, he made the propoſal to Adeline, who received it with modeſt diffidence, yet with a countenance, that ſhewed whatever united her more cloſely to him and his boy, would give her pleaſure.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE *pious* ſcruples of the pariſh prieſt, whoſe vigilance was awakened by that hope that Colonel Fliders would have made it his intereſt to defend him and Adeline by his all-controuling authority, and who was as well ſatisfied with a *douceur* on performing the marriage ceremony, were ſoon done away; and Adeline's aſſiduities, to render her huſband's ſituation at leaſt tolerable, were redoubled, now that they were unreſtrained. Wiſhing to forget all that had paſſed, he propoſed to her removing to a diſtance, from ſcenes that every day obſtructed his progreſs towards peace. She acquieſced; and that the oblivion he courted might be more complete, he reſolved on abandoning his family name, and adopting that of his father's mother; and that his ſon might never know the misfortunes of his parents, Adeline agreed with him that he ſhould be brought up with the idea that he was the offſpring of both of them, not that of a prior marriage.

Behold then Caſimir Fliders, who had ſet out in life a candidate for the higheſt military honours, ſunk by the heavy hand of adverſity into a comparatively poor country gentleman, little diſtinguiſh-

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ed from the peaſantry but by the ornaments of his own elegant mind, and known in an obſcure village, the boundary of his fame, as a reduced officer of the name of Luſignen.

It was in this ſituation that the baron de Bergzeyl became, as has been before recited, acquainted with him. The addition of three children to his family had reduced his moderate competency to a ſtraitened pittance; and had he not learnt, by rigid diſcipline, to bear the evils of this life, he might have found ſtill abundant cauſe for diſcontent; but he was ſteeled againſt external ſuffering, though his mind retained all its keen ſenſibility; and he was a kind and an affectionate huſband, though the image of his Maria was ever preſent to his remembrance, and every painful recollection was doubly enforced, whenever he traced in the features of his eldeſt boy their ſtrong reſemblance to his mother's.

Young Caſimir had, at the period we are ſpeaking of, juſt completed his eighth year; and a father, in more propitious circumſtances, might have been hailed happy in the poſſeſſion of ſo promiſing a child; but his excellencies were ill ſuited to the tract of life he ſeemed deſtined for. Inſtead of ſhewing thoſe qualities that might enable him to buffet through the world for a livelihood, he evinced a mind too much akin to his father's to bear its rough treatment with neceſſary calloſity. Diſdaining, from the firſt dawn of reaſon, whatever could diſgrace him, he was ill calculated to make thoſe ſubmiſſions, or take thoſe advantages, ſo neceſſary to raiſing a fortune. Of a temper too honeſt to deceive, and too warm to endure the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion, whoever acted with leſs integrity than himſelf, was ſure to feel his reſentment; but open to pity, commiſerating all diſtreſs, and relieving

lieving it as often as it came within the narrow ſcope of his abilities; generous to exceſs, and with joy foregoing pleaſure for the ſake of thoſe he loved; the irritable part of his diſpoſition never gave offence—it often did juſtice, but never an injury.

The children of Adeline were, a girl of four years old, and two others proportionably younger. Rhodolpha, the eldeſt, ſoon ſhewed, that the introduction of her mother's amiable temper could not ſerve as alloy to the more profound character of Madame Fliders, whoſe ſubtlety and contrivance ſhe inherited as purely as if ſhe had been her own offspring. It gave her parents concern, and her father was earneſt in correcting it: he was too much attached to his deceaſed parent to ſee the reſemblance, and, therefore, did not deſpair, as we uſually do of the cure of hereditary diſeaſes.

We have before related in what manner the baron de Bergzeyl met accidentally with colonel Luſinguen. It now remains to tell, what were the conſequences of this caſual acquaintance.

Having met in their walk, four or five times, and always indulged in converſation, as free as their novel intimacy and particular circumſtances could admit, the baron ſoon diſcovered that here was a ſociety offered him for his Ypſilanti, juſt ſuited to his wiſhes, and perfectly ſecure, provided nothing was relaxed of his or Madame Guemené's care. He, therefore, cordially invited the colonel to viſit him, and to ſuffer his children to be his little boy's playfellows.

The overture was immediately acceded to, and the ſituation of all parties much improved, or at leaſt enlivened by it. The baron obtained a very agreeable friend, with whom he could paſs his vacant

cant hours; Madame was delighted with Adeline, and the ſuppoſititious count was always pleaſed in the company of her new acquaintance.

In this way, ſtill exerciſing the utmoſt vigilance, Madame never ſuffering Ypſilanti to be from under her eye, and exacting ſuch a degree of reſpect towards her, as prevented much of the danger to be dreaded, they purſued their plan ſucceſsfully for ſixteen years, in which time their mighty charge had reaped every poſſible advantage from the beſt education that could be given her, ſtill, however, perpetually thwarting her father's virtues by evidences of a feminine frame of mind as well as of body.

Some ſecret influence ſeemed almoſt, at firſt ſight, to have attached Caſimir to her; and ſhe diſtinguiſhed him by a ſpecies, as well as a degree of affection, very different from that ſhe beſtowed on the other children of the family. The preference was myſterious to all not in the ſecret; but it was too evident to be doubted of. The baron, induced by Luſinguen's narrow circumſtances, and juſt earneſtneſs for his children's proper education, and really loving the man, offered him a ſhare of the benefits he was procuring for Ypſilanti. It was a kindneſs not to be rejected: Caſimir was conſequently her fellow-ſtudent in all the learning that could adorn the mind, and every art that could improve the perſon of a gentleman.

To go hand in hand with thoſe we love, is the beſt method not only of ſhortening a journey, but of improving all its common occurrences into delight. So it was with Ypſilanti, who now went on in all her ſtudies with redoubled ardour, and even in thoſe branches of them which a contrariety of diſpoſition made diſpleaſing to her, if Caſimir could firſt

attain

attain the knowledge required, and then communicate it to her, ſhe would learn with avidity.

It was happy for that ſport of fortune, poor Luſinguen, that he had formed this ſingle tie to ſociety for his comforts were again attacked, and the death of Adeline once more caſt him into the deep vale of ſorrow. The baron, ſomewhat leſs the ſelfiſh, pleaſure-hunting mortal than he had been, felt due concern at his misfortune. Ypſilanti's tears were not to be reſtrained; nor could ſhe be ſhamed out of her grief by the uſual methods of ſtiffening a boyiſh ſpirit againſt the adverſe ſtrokes it muſt expect to meet with. She was all loveſineſs in her grief: ſhe was—O! how did it wring her father's heart to ſee it! a very woman.

Every poſſible conſolation having been brought forward for the mourning family, they were beginning to reſume their former habits of life. Caſimir returned to ſtudies he was now concluding, with an oppreſſed heart, and in a diſpoſition of mind, that ſhewed how much heavier misfortune ſits on us as we advance in age, and how intimately this world's calamities interweave themſelves in the ſpring of ſenſibility. Again the power of Ypſilanti was perceptible: ſhe, and ſhe only, could cheer him. Too much hurt herſelf by the misfortune to ſtrive againſt its effects, and thoſe effects increaſed by ſympathy in his affliction, ſhe ſeemed fit only to increaſe his melancholy, and, on this ſuppoſition, they were, for ſome days, kept aſunder. But thoſe who judged for them erred through ignorance, and were aſtoniſhed to find the good produced, by giving way to their repeated complaints of the hardſhip of ſeparation.

A preference, ſo decided, could not fail of rouſing jealouſy even in an infant mind, ſuch as Rho-

dolpha, the colonel's eldeſt daughter. Not at all ſatisfied when ſhe murmured at it, with being reminded how fit it is for boys to aſſociate with boys, and how little the girls have to do with their buſineſs and amuſements, ſhe ſtill ſtomached the neglect which her ill-conditioned mind was the chief apology for. Feminine as was Ypſilanti in all things, ſhe would gladly have formed a friendſhip with one whom nature ſeemed to have deſtined for her friend, if ſhe was to ſeek one in this family; but ſomething reſolvable only into the ſecret workings of humanity had attracted her to Caſimir: his virtues had attached her inſeparably to him, while every thing that could be diſcovered in the mind of Rhodolpha, ſerved but to repel affection, and put every one on their guard againſt her arts.

Hitherto her ſpirit had ſhewn itſelf only in childiſh malice, and the invention of inſupportable falſehoods; and her frequent defeats ſhould have taught her ſubmiſſion; but in proportion as others were diligent to exclude her, ſhe was earneſt to be admitted. She was exceſſively fond of Ypſilanti, not becauſe ſhe found any thing in her head or heart that accorded with her own, but Ypſilanti was count de Hoenſdern, rich, finely dreſſed, waited on with great reſpect, very handſome, very generous, and very good natured, all which circumſtances produced in Rhodolpha a paſſion rather above her age, (which was nearly that of Ypſilanti) a paſſion, not very different from that which often produces ſerious unions in the adult world. Shew, and an ability to indulge a capricious woman in all her fancied wants, too frequently are attractives to an inconſiderate female, and placing her *ſummum bonum* on ſuch unſubſtantial foundations, as they periſh naturally, or fall away ſuddenly, ſhe is diſappointed, and miſerable.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

THE baron had now for many years been ſtruggling with anxieties and difficulties, that nothing but the end he had in view could recompenſe; and ſuch were at times his feelings and diſtreſſes, that, but for ſhame, he could have abandoned his ſcheme.

A part of his anxiety had operated in favour of young Luſinguen, whom ſuperior years and ripening judgment, added to his evidently warm attachment to Ypſilanti, made one of his moſt formidable enemies. The colonel, his father, having no means of placing him in the world without renewing his own renounced connexion with it, was greatly at a loſs what to do with him. He had, by good fortune, received a gratuitous education that fitted him for any rank in life; but he wanted friends and money to puſh him forward: his ſpirit bore impatiently the confined circle he was forced to tread; he felt his own powers, and he panted to exert them; his uneaſineſs, which would have delighted his father, could he have indulged him, now only fretted him. He communicated it to the baron, who wiſhing himſelf fairly rid of one he could not but love, and deſirous of aſſiſting poor Luſinguen,

ſinguen, made him a preſent of a ſum of money ſufficient to purchaſe him a commiſſion in the French ſervice, and renewing a ſlight connexion he had with a gentleman of Straſbourg, who he knew could aid him, he gave him letters of recommendation and ſent him off.

Nothing leſs than the ſpirit her education had infuſed into Ypſilanti, could have prevented her betraying her ſex by her grief at parting with Caſimir, the companion of all her ſtudies and amuſements. Inſtructed to condemn her own weakneſs as ſhameful, and yet unable to conquer, ſhe bore up with aſſumed fortitude, while ſhe thought her conduct watched, or was with the baron: but the moment ſhe was alone with Madame Guemené, not all her reſpect for her could reſtrain her tears, and when reproached for them, and told how ill they became her ſex, ſhe would break out into exclamation of regret that ſhe could not change ſexes with Rhodolpha, whoſe tough heart could ſtand the parting without flinching.

Increaſing years neither diminiſhed his burden, nor aided the baron's ſtrength to bear it, and every day unfolding to his view ſome danger, or ſome obſtacle he had not foreſeen, he could only hope that the deceit would laſt while he lived, and that by perſeverance he might ſpare himſelf the agony he ſhuddered at even in idea, that of a diſcovery of his illicit practices. What was afterwards to become of her he was ſo cruelly kind to, he dared not aſk himſelf.

But this want of fortitude to meet a danger did not preſerve him from the ſuggeſtions of his heart, and his hopes of ſucceſs now almoſt every hour diminiſhing, he began, when his young torment and delight had nearly attained her fourteenth year,

to

to meditate on future contingencies, and, at length reſolved, as her well-cultivated mind, and amiable diſpoſition promiſed prudence and dutiful ſubmiſſion, to reveal to her the myſtery of her birth.

For this important communication, which chilled all the blood in his veins as often as he attempted to form a plan for it, he was only waiting, as he thought, a proper opportunity, but, in truth, an increaſe of courage, when a circumſtance, in itſelf very trifling, ſtaggered his hopes, and confounded his deſigns.

Rhodolpha Luſinguen had over-reached one of the younger children in ſomething reſpecting their paſtimes. The little ſufferer complained of the injury, and Ypſilanti took on herſelf to procure the redreſs of her grievance. Rhodolpha was more eaſily convinced ſhe had done wrong than perſuaded to do right; and Ypſilanti's indignation being excited by the fraud, and the prevaricating of the culprit, ſhe gave way to her reſentment, in terms that might have ſchooled her ſeniors into honeſty; proteſting, that were the whole world to be gained by the leaſt deceit, ſhe would ſcorn to uſe it; and calling on the unfeeling Rhodolpha to aſk herſelf how ſhe would like to ſuffer what ſhe now inflicted. She might as profitably have preached to the rocks; for there was in her hearer's temper a firm baſis of ſelf-intereſt which nothing could ſhake; and, while that was ſafe, ſhe cared little for reproof, or even puniſhment. Ypſilanti, wanting compulſive power to make Rhodolpha reſtore what ſhe had fraudulently obtained, had no other means of ſatisfying herſelf than by making up the loſs to the child, which, with the utmoſt alacrity, ſhe did; but ſuch was the diſguſt ſhe conceived at Rhodolpha's conduct, that ſhe would not aſſociate with her

till the perverſe girl, feeling how much this alienation affected her pleaſures, condeſcended to buy forgiveneſs by reſtitution, profeſſions of repentance, and promiſes of amendment.

Ypſilanti, too generous to bear any ill-will towards a ſubmitting enemy, and deſirous to ſave her as much as poſſible of the pain of reconciliation, met her more than half way in her overtures, and the goodneſs of her nature taking the place of policy, ſhe treated her new conqueſt with peculiar lenity.

All this, though trivial to an unintereſted byſtander, was moſt heedfully noticed by the baron, to whom every ſentiment that honeſt indignation forced from the heart of Ypſilanti was a reproach and a dagger. After this proof of her native integrity, he rejected the idea of relying on her filial duty for acquieſence or ſubmiſſion; and began to perceive he might, ere long, be forced to the practice of as much ſelf-defence againſt his daughter's honeſty, as againſt the inconteſtible claims of the Vringen family.

The diſtraction of his thoughts, and the extremity he was now driving to, obliged him to frequent private converſations with Madame Guemené, whoſe part was rendered a very troubleſome taſk, by the difficulty ſhe was under in juſtifying, even to thoſe ſhe had the care of, her inceſſant watchfulneſs over them. Caſimir, now more than nineteen years of age, and introduced as he had been to the world, ſeemed not at all to reliſh Madame's attendance on Ypſilanti whenever they were together. Reſpect and gratitude kept him ſilent; but it was evident, that, at every return home, his diſguſt towards Madame was increaſed.

One

One morning, the baron having ſpent the whole of the preceding night in painful ruminations, meeting Madame, by accident, in a part of the houſe they were not much accuſtomed to reſort to, took her into an adjoining room, and locking the door, began on the uſual ſubject of their deliberations. It ſo happened, that beyond this room was another in which were kept tempting delicacies for the table, ſuch as conſerves, ſweetmeats, &c. Rhodolpha Luſinguen had a natural taſte for "ſtolen waters, and bread eaten in ſecret," and truſting that the family were elſewhere employed, had got in there, and was moſt plentifully regaling. Too buſy to attend to any noiſe, ſhe heard nothing of what paſſed in the outer room; but in her diligence, a violent fit of coughing ſeizing her, betrayed her ſituation. The baron ſtopped his diſcourſe: Madame, without-cries and uplifted hands, made towards the door of Rhodolpha's paradiſe of ſweets, and haſtily opening it, brought forth the delinquent, who, completely aſtoniſhed and terrified, ſtarted from her repaſt, without recollection enough even to remove the teſtimonies of her enjoyment from her face. With ſtained lips and pallid cheeks, her throat ſmarting with the luſcious acids ſhe had revelled in, and every joint trembling with apprehenſion, ſhe ſtood before the baron an object of merriment, had not his own guilty conſcience converted her childiſh plundering into a ſerious calamity. Not doubting ſhe had heard what had paſſed, he was at the utmoſt loſs how to puniſh her, and ſecure himſelf. He was too much a gentleman to give his rage vent, by lifting his hand againſt a female; and the daughter of his friend; he would have diſmiſſed her from his doors inſtantly; but that was to publiſh the ſecret he ſuppoſed her in poſſeſſion of. After a long ex-

amination, from which he could get nothing he could believe, Rhodolpha perſiſting in her ignorance, and he, from her perſiſting, inferring that ſhe was aware of the importance of what ſhe had learnt, ſolitude and confinement were ſuggeſted by Madame as the fitteſt and ſafeſt mode of puniſhing, and Rhodolpha was, for ſome days, treated with the utmoſt rigour, no endeavours being ſpared to learn from her how much of the converſation ſhe had overheard.

Provoked at being detected, and at the diſproportionate and unaccountable ſeverity, a fault, ſhe eſteemed light, was treated with, the workings of her paſſions ſettled into a deep reſolution of revenge. The baron ſhe conſidered as out of her reach; but Madame Guemené, the more immediate inſtrument of her woes, ſhe vowed, ſhould, on her releaſe, ſuffer all the uneaſineſs ſhe could occaſion her with a due regard to her own ſafety.

By this accident, the baron was ſtill farther hurried to conclude ſome ſcheme of ſafety; and his ultimate reſolve was, in caſe of extremity, to go over to England, where he had, in the early part of his life, ſpent ſome time; and having drawn together all the ready money he could collect, live there on it in quiet and obſcurity. Previous to this final remove, he propoſed going himſelf thither, to adjuſt matters. In the mean time Madame was to acquaint Ypſilanti with the whole ſecret attached to her, and to diſpoſe her to follow her father, and ſubmit to circumſtances.

But as it was not, in the baron's apprehenſion, abſolutely impoſſible that Ypſilanti's piety towards him, and a due repreſentation of the diſtreſſes he was about to encounter, might work on her,

her, and prevail with her to accede to a ſupport of the fraud; and time abating the ſuſpicion entertained of Rhodolpha, he propoſed halting at a ſmall village, about thirty miles from them, till he ſhould hear from Madame Guemené how his daughter appeared affected by the diſcloſure. Should ſhe revolt at the deceit, he was then to puſh forward to ſecure himſelf. Should Madame's eloquence prevail, as he wiſhed, he was then immediately to retire to a ſituation, which, in enjoyment, was painful; but which it was death to his pride, and his covetouſneſs to think of abandoning.

CHAP. XXXI.

BEFORE this could be put in practice, lenient measures had been used with Rhodolpha to get at the point in question. She had been restored to her usual pleasures, and bribed to confess what she had heard; but for once Rhodolpha was honest, and too indignant to gratify her persecutor even by a false assertion, she thought only of revenge.

The baron set out; Casimir was at that time absent, and it was hoped would continue so long enough for a completion of the scheme before his return: the rest of the Lusinguen family were without consideration to be abandoned to the state they were found in, with increased want and unimproved means of supplying them. Ypsilanti, if she was obdurate, was on quitting the castle to write a resignation of it and her rights to the countess de Vringen, and then to follow her father.

He had left home but a few hours, when Casimir returned, brought back by the necessity of consulting him and his father on an opportunity of advancement offered him. Ypsilanti, sorrowing for the absence of the baron, whom she was wholly

y unaccuſtomed to part from, was rejoiced as this viſit from her friend. Madame had not yet been able to begin on her great diſcovery, and now the difficulty was increaſed by the impoſſibility of ſeparating Ypſilanti, and Caſimir.

Whether this vigilant guardian's powers of perception were brightened, whether approaching dangers made her more keen in obſervation, or whether it was mere fancy, it is not eaſy to decide; but Caſimir's joy at meeting Ypſilanti ſeemed to her to want nothing of that that marks the rapture of a lover on returning to his miſtreſs. It was received by Ypſilanti with every expreſſion that could demonſtrate equal affection, and Madame was beyond meaſure perplexed by the conviction, that even when a part of her expected difficulties were overcome, ſhe ſhould have ſtill greater to combat with, if on divulging the ſecret, Ypſilanti ſhould avow her attachment to Caſimir, and refuſe to quit him. Leſt matters ſhould proceed to farther extremities, ſhe reſolved not to let that night paſs without at leaſt relieving her mind from the oppreſſive burned of ſecrecy.

Caſimir had arrived late in the evening at his father's, and came to the caſtle before noon. It was ſummer, and the accuſtomed afternoon's amuſement was riding on horſeback; in this he accompanied them, the party conſiſting of Ypſilanti, Madame, Rhodolpha, and himſelf, with two ſervants to attend the Count de Hoenſdern.

They were ſome miles from home, and about to return, when the beauty of the evening atmoſphere was obſcured by a ſudden thick cloudineſs; the wind aroſe, and every thing beſpeaking an approaching tempeſt, they halted to conſider what chance they

had of reaching the caſtle before it was too violent to be encountered. Opinions varied. Madame was at all events for puſhing home; Rhodolpha, ſolely to thwart her, was for trying to gain a village near them; Caſimir propoſed ſtopping where they were, a few minutes, to ſee what direction the ſtorm took; and Ypſilanti, making up cloſe to him, thought his judgment beſt.

A heavy rain, attended with thunder and lightning, and a tempeſtuous wind, formed the whole into a complete hurricane, and the party had no alternative but that of making towards the village in ſight. Caſimir and Ypſilanti went on firſt; Madame, not ſo expert a rider, could not keep up with them; and Rhodolpha enjoying the diſtreſs ſhe ſuffered, and her unavailing efforts to ſit her refractory horſe, bore without regret all the inconvenience and diſtreſs of her own ſituation, happy in obſerving, that one on whom ſhe wiſhed every ill to fall in abundance, was ſtill in worſe plight than herſelf.

Madame's horſe at length making a dead ſtop, Rhodolpha adviſed her to uſe her whip to get him forward; the conſequence was what the malicious girl had foreſeen: he plunged, threw his rider, and ſet off full ſpeed, towards a thick foreſt, near at hand. Caſimir and Ypſilanti were out of ſight: one of the ſervants purſued the horſe, the other diſmounted, and came to Madame, who, not hurt, but ſenſeleſs through terror, lay on the ground. Rhodolpha, affecting proper concern, alighted, and aſſiſted in recovering her, whoſe firſt care and enquiries were for the Count.

Being unable to walk, and too much terrified to take Rodolpha's horſe, and the ſtorm having now conſiderably abated, it was agreed that the little

little which remained of day-light ſhould be made uſe of for Rodolpha to go to the village, and inform the reſt of the partly what had happened. It was Madame's expreſs injunction, that the Count and Caſimir ſhould immediately rejoin her, and, by that time, ſhe hoped the horſe would be recovered, or that, in ſome way or other, ſhe ſhould be able to get back.

Rodolpha willingly undertook the part aſſigned to her, and the ſervant was to guard Madame in her abſence. Here was now a fine opportunity for revenge; and it was not loſt on her it preſented itſelf to. To make Madame paſs the night by the road ſide, with all the accompaniments of terror and vexation ſhe knew ſhe muſt endure, Rodolpha thought would be ſweet vengeance for all the puniſhments ſhe had inflicted; and as the young lady had improved on her grand-mother's temper by infuſing into it an additional quantity of the black paſſions of the mind, ſhe felt not the leaſt unwillingneſs to put her ſcheme in practice.

The ſmall diſtance to the village afforded her ready invention time enough to contrive all the machinery of her drama. She intended to beguile the twilighht in ſearching more widely than was neceſſary for her companions; and then, under pretence of conducting them to the ſpot where ſhe had left the good lady, ſhe deſigned to lead them a contrary road, which would bring them much ſooner to the caſtle than to poor Madame. The darkneſs and inevitable miſtake were to bear the blame of this erroneous pilotage. Nothing, ſhe knew, could be done for Madame after their return, as the night and intricacy of their route, would prevent her being found. What might be her fate, or what the ſufferings

of

of Ypſilanti, ſhe cared not: at all events, ſhe knew ſhe ſhould have the pleaſure of forcing her enemy to paſs a night *al freſco.*

She found the houſe in which her brother and Ypſilanti had taken refuge. They were impatiently waiting Madame's coming up to them, and expecting that ſhe would do as they had done, they were ſtanding at the door to find out their habitation. The ſight of Rodolpha overjoyed them; and it being now quite fair, they gladly put themſelves under her guidance to return. She, who had come from the right hand, was very careful to ſet off again towards the left. Caſimir aſked her if ſhe was ſure ſhe knew the way, the direction ſhe took making him doubt her geography. She was poſitive, and they were obedient. She entertained no doubt that a couple of hours would bring them to the caſtle, but chance had outwitted her cunning; and it was evident to all the party that they were loſt. Rhodolpha's pride forbade her to confeſs her ignorance, till Ypſilanti growing faint with fatigue, and Caſimir provoked at his ſiſter's ill ſupported preſumption, her followers refuſed any longer to wander with her.

It was midnight when they halted, to conſult what could be done. All thoughts of finding Madame till the light aided them were abandoned, and their only reſource was to ſeek an abode for the night. Every care now reſted on Caſimir; for Ypſilanti was more than half dead with wearineſs and vexation, and Rodolpha was in all the panic of guilt and cowardice. They were in a high road; but whither it led was wholly unknown to them; and in this ſpot muſt they have remained, at the hazard of their lives, had not the riſing

moon

moon ſhewn them the roof of a large houſe, but a few paces from them.

Rejoiced at this diſcovery, Caſimir would inſtantly have gone himſelf to aſk admiſſion; but Ypſilanti in every diſtreſs clinging to him, intreating him not to leave her, and almoſt reeling from her horſe, he ſtaid to ſupport her, and ſent Rhodolpha, with a ſtate of their misfortune, to beg ſhelter for the remainder of the night.

The houſe in view belonged to a phyſician of eminence. He had been called out to a patient, and his wife was ſitting up, waiting his return. Acceſs was therefore immediately procured, and ſhe received the benighted ſtrangers with every attention of hoſpitality. Their horſes being committed to the care of a ſervant, Rodolpha entered the houſe, followed by Caſimir ſupporting Ypſilanti.

There was ſomething peculiarly intereſting in ſeeing, under ſuch circumſtances, a young man of a fine figure, and a military dreſs, leading a lad of exquiſite beauty, and of an appearance that beſpoke ſuperior rank. The groupe demanded particular attention, and received it from their benevolent hoſteſs, whoſe name was Buler, and who omitted nothing that could atone to her viſitors for their unpleaſant adventure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

DR. BULER returned home before any other relief could be adminiſtered to the diſtreſſed than a glaſs or two of wine. His wife went to give orders for beds to be prepared for them, and a change of cloths for Rhodolpha, who was the only perſon that needed them, the other two having got dry in the village they had houſed in. The doctor came up to the ſeat where Caſimir was with Ypſilanti, who ſat in a ſtupor; and taking her hand, he began to comfort her by the kindeſt aſſurances of aſſiſtance, and by informing them that they were not more than eight miles from the place the ſtorm had overtaken them in. But Ypſilanti's ſpirits were worn out, and in her concern for her beloved Madame Guemené, forgetting all her precepts, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, and her agitation ſuddenly checking them, ſhe fainted away.

She was now incapable of exerciſing that exceſſive delicacy and reſerve ſhe had for the beſt reaſons been brought up in. The doctor reached from the other end of the room what would recover her, and opening her collar to give her air, ſuſpicions which her whole appearance and the texture

ture of her ſkin had excited in him, were confirmed. He was convinced that ſhe was a female in diſguiſe, and Caſimir's exceſſive anxiety pointing him out as her lover, it was to be inferred that ſome myſtery was attached to their ſituation, Ypſilanti's indiſpoſition, and its conſequences, made the gratification of curioſity at preſent premature. The Doctor therefore giving his wife a hint of his diſcovery, perſuaded them all to retire to their ſeparate chambers, in hopes that reſt would be their remedy, and undertook the next morning to conduct them to the caſtle.

Mrs. Buler herſelf attended Ypſilanti, who, as if accuſtomed to be waited on by females, made no objection when ſhe offered to aſſiſt her in undreſſing. She had expected from the little ſecrecy the ſtranger ſeemed to affect, that ſhe would mention the diſagreement of her ſex and appearance; but not a word did ſhe utter, except expreſſions of concern for Madame, and gratitude for the kindneſs ſhe had met with; and Mrs. Buler returned to her huſband well ſatisfied that ſhe had attended a very pretty girl.

Rhodolpha ſlept undiſturbed, and careleſs for the reſt of the world. Caſimir, apprehenſive leſt Ypſilanti ſhould ſuffer by her exceſſive fatigue, got no reſt from which he was not rouſed almoſt inceſſantly by the moſt diſtreſſing anxieties. He roſe the firſt of the trio, and on leaving his chamber met Dr. Buler, who now thought fit to mention the inutility of diſguiſing his friend's ſex.

His words had more the aſpect of myſtery than any thing Caſimir recollected about the Count de Hoenſdern; and a very ſhort colloquy convinced the doctor of that which was not eaſy to credit, that he

was

was not in the ſecret. But now his curioſity was awakened, and Dr. Buler, ignorant of the importance of his communication, inſtantly divulged what had hitherto ſo effectually, and with ſo much labour, been kept from his knowledge.

It is not in the power of words to deſcribe what at this moment paſſed through the mind of Caſimir. He who had felt for the Count de Hoenſdern all that the paſſion of generous love inſpires, and which he had found ill requited by the friendſhip ſhe returned it with, now ſeemed to have the greateſt felicity earth can beſtow, brought within his reach; but when he thought again, and conſidered the immeaſurable diſparity between himſelf and her, he was beyond all comfort wretched. That natural tenacity of happineſs which is inſeparable from our frame, is productive of jealouſy even in the beſt minds, and even Caſimir could not but with a ſigh reflect that ſome one, more fortunate becauſe more noble or more rich, would now ſnatch from his poſſeſſion the bleſſing he was but juſt aware of.

What could be the motives for this concealment it was impoſſible for him to fathom; but a little information he had collected in his abſence from Germany reſpecting the Baron de Bergzeyl's family was all that Dr. Buler required to draw a juſt concluſion. The gentleman at Straſbourg to whom the Baron had given Caſimir a letter, had mentioned as of his own knowledge the importance of a ſon to the family he was ſo indebted to, and the injury his birth muſt prove to the Count de Vringen's poſterity. Dr. Buler therefore inferred the truth, that the girl had been brought up as a boy, for the ſcandalous purpoſe of intercepting the Count de Vringen's right. This well-founded ſuppoſition

poſition he had prudence enough to keep to himſelf.

Impatient as young Luſinguen ever felt in the abſence of Ypſilanti, nothing he had yet experienced equalled the earneſt longing he had at this time to ſee her. Every footſtep he heard in the houſe made him hope ſhe was coming; and he ſuſtained the diſappointment of ſeeing Rhodolpha enter firſt, with ſcarce the ſemblance of good humour. As if he expected the divulging this ſecret would have an effect on her perſon; as if he thought ſhe would now be converted into ſomething he had never before ſeen, he formed to his imagination ideas that bore no relation to her, and could not perſuade himſelf that the object of his love and friendſhip would appear under the ſame form.

Unwilling as they all, except careleſs Rhodolpha, were that ſhe ſhould be diſturbed, all wiſhed for her riſing; and Rhodolpha having heard the great news, was not to be reſtrained from going to her chamber.

Mrs. Buler accompanied her thither, prepared to tell Ypſilanti that her concealment was no longer poſſible; and not entertaining a doubt that ſhe had been made privy to the fraud. But ſhe found her in a very unfit ſtate to bear the information; for ſhe had about her every ſymptom of a violent fever. Exceſſive wearineſs, terror, and anxiety for Madame Guemené, had diſordered her delicate frame, deprived her of all reſt, and reduced her to a very alarming ſtate. Dr. Buler viſited her; and Caſimir in an agony of apprehenſion, immediately ſet off to the caſtle to bring either Madame with him, or at leaſt tidings of her.

Rhodolpha had now a more complete revenge than ſhe had hoped for; but by its having gone too far,

far, ſhe was deprived of all the ſatisfaction attending it. She began to think what ſhe ſhould do if Ypſilanti's fever proved fatal; and her fear on this head producing to ſtrangers the apparent ſemblance of attachment, ſhe was a vigilant nurſe.

Madame Guemené arrived with Caſimir as ſoon as poſſible. When ſhe had waited Rhodolpha's coming back much longer than was neceſſary, ſhe had made towards the village in queſt of the party: there ſhe had been told which road they took on leaving it; and as it led to Hoenſdern, ſhe purſued it, in hopes of meeting them at home. Diſappointed in this expectation, ſhe had paſſed a night of the moſt cruel anxiety, and had diſpatched all the meſſengers ſhe could collect in ſearch of the Count, her joy at meeting whom was conſiderably abated by the ſituation ſhe found her in, and almoſt converted into poſitive grief by the diſcovery that had been made.

Mrs. Buler, a worthy open-hearted woman, rejoiced in the opportunity of rendering any one ſervice; amply repaid for her exertions by the romantic novelty of the incident, ſhe had not reſtrained her inclination to amuſe her acquaintance with it; and a female friend having called before they knew how Ypſilanti had paſſed the night, ſhe had reported the accident that had procured her three gueſts, and one of them a lovely female in diſguiſe. Had it been poſſible to get acceſs, her chamber would have been crouded with goſſips dying with curioſity to ſee this wonderful ſtranger; for though Dr. Buler lived on the confines of a ſmall village, ſuch was the general concern, that not a being would willingly have ſtaid behind when ſuch a ſight was to be ſeen.

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But as Ypſilanti was ſuppoſed aſleep till it was diſcovered that her ſituation was ſerious, Mrs. Buler was forced to refuſe her friends this gratification, and to atone for it by relating all the particulars of this aſtoniſhing tale.

Rumour was immediately buſy; and before a a word of the buſineſs had reached Ypſilanti's ear, the country for ſome miles round was in the ſecret. Madame Guemené, in the utmoſt conſternation, and divided between her care for her charge, and her deſire that the baron ſhould have immediate information of what had paſſed, knew not what to do, nor whither to go. At length, by the perſuaſion of Dr. Buler, ſhe committed Ypſilanti to his care; and under pretence of fetching the Baron, but in reality to warn him to fly, ſhe ſet off for the place where he was waiting the event of her concerted revelation.

The ſufferings of Caſimir were ſuch as claimed univerſal pity. Overjoyed at firſt at the diſcovery, and his imagination rapidly carrying him on to its conſequences, his hopes had been in an inſtant daſhed by adverting to his own dependent ſtate of fortune. Again they were raiſed by converſing with Dr. Buler, and learning from him that all proſpect of rich inheritance was wiped out by this accident. He could not but grieve at whatever affected the happineſs of his beloved Ypſilanti; yet he was comforted by thinking he might prove a harbour to her in misfortune; and his manly ſpirit roſe with exultation while he fancied himſelf her protector. Once more all his joys were clouded. She was attacked by diſeaſe: his fears were as penetrating into futurity as his hopes had been. His

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intellectual eye ſhewed her to him ſtretched on the bed of ſickneſs, languiſhing, conſuming, and at laſt dying; and poor Caſimir, with all his natural and acquired courage, when his thoughts traced this idea, was almoſt as much a woman as ſhe he ſighed for.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

SOME days had elapſed before Ypſilanti's fever warranted any expectation of revovery; and Dr. Butler's houſe was, on a ſudden converted into a houſe of mourning. The patient ſcarely needed greater care than young Luſinguen; his mental diſorder varied with her bodily ſuffering; and rejecting with contempt all the ſorry conſolation Rhodolpha could offer him, he gave himſelf up to the moſt melancholy apprehenſions.

Madame Guemené having diſpatched her embaſſy, kept the reſult of it ſecret; and bending all her attention towards the reſtoration of Ypſilanti, furniſhed no more food for curioſity. All that ſhe revealed was, that as ſoon as the young lady recovered, they were to leave Germany.

A naturally good conſtitution, confirmed by the moſt judicious care, and improved by the exerciſes her particular ſituation had led her to, enabled Ypſilanti to weather this ſtorm; and as ſoon as it was judged a fit ſeaſon, Madame entruſted her with that which ſhe alone was ignorant of. Nature,

ture, who till this period ſeemed only to have whiſpered in her, deterred by every poſſible menace from ſpeaking out, now raiſed her voice, and prompted her young diſciple to inſiſt, that the firſt cloaths ſhe was dreſſed in on her riſing, ſhould be ſuch as ſuited her regained ſex. In theſe and in every charm that beauty, not to be conquered by ſickneſs, but ideally improved by the compaſſion her debility excited, ſhe received Caſimir; and, as if ſhe had now been ſuddenly taught to tranſlate the language of friendſhip into that of love, every ſentiment of rapture he expreſſed ſpoke to her heart, while his cordial congratulations, as if betraying his intereſt in them, brought a ſuffuſion over her pallid countenance, that evinced they were well accepted.

It was proper that ſhe ſhould remain where ſhe was till ſhe had, in ſome meaſure, regained her ſtrength. Madame impatiently brooked the delay, though as much as any one convinced it was neceſſary; and prompted by her maternal love for Ypſilanti, to conſult her eaſe even in trifles, under an injunction to ſecrecy, that ſhe well knew would be religiouſly obſerved, ſhe entruſted her with all ſhe knew of her deſtiny; informed her where her father was; warned her that ſhe muſt relinquiſh every idea of the grandeur ſhe had been brought up in, and ſounded her to diſcover her ſentiments on the unſucceſsful deceit, and the conſequences of its failure. From all her anſwers it was evident, that Ypſilanti deteſted it, but was diſpoſed to attribute it entirely to her father's fondneſs for her. She ſhrunk not from any of the intimidations held out to her; ſhe wiſhed at all events to be placed with the Baron, and ſeemed to think

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all her future mortifications atoned for, by being acknowledged a daughter.

Little communication on the part of Caſimir was neceſſary to render Dr. Buler the confidant of his ſentiments. Every thing, even before the diſcloſure, had beſpoke the paſſion that occupied him; and nothing now appearing very hoſtile to it, the doctor encouraged him, by his advice, to a meaſure he had almoſt reſolved on, that of avowing his new hopes to Ypſilanti. Yet, as often as he aſked himſelf, what were the grounds of that hope; as often as he compared Caſimir Luſinguen, unaided by paternal wealth or influence, ſtruggling to raiſe himſelf from indigence by the ſlow operation of merit, and dependent on the moſt precarious of all profeſſions, to even the *daughter* of the Baron de Bergzeyl, reaſon told him he was preſumptuous. Still, however, love encouraged the preſumption; and he ſeemed, though unconſcious of his own pretenſions to feel that he was no unwarranted intruder into a rank he believed ſuperior to his.

In a heart like that of Ypſilanti it was no arduous undertaking to kindle friendſhip into love. She returned Caſimir's affection with every ſentiment that could reward it; and uncorrupted by the forms of the world, ſhe, on his declaring himſelf, made no ſcruple of pledging her faith to him, as far as her own intentions and promiſe could bind her; but well inſtructed in what ſhe owed to her unfortunate father, not all the world could have tempted her to put his authority out of the queſtion.

Dr. Buler and his wife were, on the face of circumſtances, perſuaded that Ypſilanti's father could not object to the union; and Madame Guemené, ſtill more to be truſted, as more in his confidence was of their opinion; and ſeeing the advantage of her young charge's having another protector, but not caring to force her timidity to a meaſure ſhe might repent of, without a ſufficient authority, ſhe undertook a ſecond journey to the Baron, leaving Caſimir and his beloved as careleſs as poſſible about the great convulſion that had ſhaken her from her orbit, and as happy as the proſpect of happineſs they thought out of the reach of accident could make two people, one of whom was too ſanguine, and the other too inexperienced to judge of conſequences, or apprehend any danger while they were not ſeparated.

Madame came back, bearing in her countenance and on her lips the wiſhed for acquieſcence. No herald was ever ſo well received, for no herald's tidings could be ſo acceptable. Caſimir's joy was beyond all moderation, while Ypſilanti, why ſhe knew not, though a prohibition to her wiſhes would have been as fatal to her peace as to his, rejoiced literally with trembling; and hardly knowing what ſhe would have, looked forward to the hour he was anticipating, with predominant dread and preturbation. Yet when he pleaded his right, and urged the uſeleſſneſs of delay, ſhe, whoſe temper could not endure giving a moment's pain to another, unheſitatingly referred herſelf to his will.

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The following day was then to unite them, and to end much of her father's and Madame Guemené's anxiety about her. The former had come to a reſolution nearly tantamount to that of abandoning her; for he directed that ſhe ſhould accompany Caſimir into the neighbourhood of his duty, and there remain with him. Madame, inſeparable from her, and naturally attached to France, was ſtill to continue with her, and, hearty in the cauſe, was buſy in removing impediments.

Poverty they knew muſt be their lot for a time; yet there were reaſonable grounds to hope it might be mitigated ſo as to admit comfort. The Baron offered them a ſum that would anſwer the purpoſe of fixing them in a decent habitation; and, for their convenience ſent it by Madame. He declined informing them whither his diſtreſſing circumſtances would lead him, and adviſed the utmoſt ſecrecy and circumſpection in their conduct, as it was not to be doubted the Count de Vringen, vindictive as he was, would be happy in an opportunity of annoying them. How, or on what ground, he forebode to add, well knowing that had his daughter an intimation that the ſum he remitted her was in juſtice his property, nothing could have bowed her ſpirit to accept it.

Nothing was remaining on the minds of the young people, but a wiſh to relieve every anxiety Colonel Luſinguen might be under on his ſon's account, though he was not ignorant of his preſent caſual abode. Caſimir communicated to him his views and deſigns, and expreſſed

a wish that he could make it convenient to come into France.

This duty closed the day; and animated by a consideration he dared not hint to his agitated fair one, that he pronounced an adieu he should not be called on to repeat, he parted from her at her chamber door.

CHAP. XXXIV.

GOOD Dr. Buler and his chattering wife were delighted with the idea of ſeeing too ſuch ſingularly amiable young folks united under their roof; and Mrs. Buler was buſy in making every preparation that could honour her gueſts. She had not concluded her labour, nor had Caſimir or Ypſilanti once thought of ſleep, when they were alarmed by the haſty arrival of a meſſenger, who, panting for breath, and waiting only to have an anſwer to a ſhort query, whether the Baron de Bergzeyl's daughter was there, and to deliver a letter for her, mounted his horſe again and departed.

Mrs. Buler went up to Ypſilanti's room herſelf with the letter. Madame and ſhe were ſitting in deep converſation. Rhodolpha in the adjoining chamber was awake and ruminating on the little chance ſhe ſtood for retaining any part of the little affection her brother bore her, when ſhe, whom ſhe had ever ſince the diſcovery regarded and hated as a rival, was ſo much nearer to him. Caſimir was pacing his apartment, and

every minute referring to the ſtarry firmament to know how time went.

All theſe, with the addition of Dr. Buler, were ſoon called together by the import of the diſpatch ſo myſteriouſly conveyed.—It was a billet containing theſe words:

"ILL as myſelf and my family have been treated in the deceit your father has practiſed, I cannot conſider you as having any ſhare in the guilt of it, unleſs you attempt to juſtify it. I am therefore prompted by compaſſion for you, and regard to the memory of your mother, my ſiſter, to warn you of a danger that awaits you. The Count de Vringen is beyond meaſure enraged at the injury we have ſuſtained; and it is his reſolution to ſecure you for the purpoſe of making your father refund every article of my uncle's property that can be got at. He knows where you are, and has given orders for fetching you hither. In caſe he fails here, he offers a thouſand florins to any one who will betray you. Whether or not he will ſucceed in his firſt deſign, depends, under heaven, on the fleetneſs of the horſe that brings you this; for on the fidelity and diſpatch of the meſſenger I can rely. As ſoon therefore as this comes to you, if you would ſave yourſelf from his fury, get away without loſing a moment. I ſcarce know what courſe to adviſe you to, but I am of opinion you will hardly be ſafe in any country nearer than England or Holland; in the latter I think you would, with caution, be out of reach; but could you get through Flanders to Oſtend, and there find a veſſel ready to ſail for England, it would be the better courſe. Fearing you may be

be diſtreſſed for money, I have ſent you a bill of exchange, which the friend I have it from aſſures will be ready caſh to you in any town in England or Holland. Though a ſtranger to you, I am much intereſted for you, and happy to hear you have a prudent perſon to take care of you. Let nothing, I beſeech you, ever tempt you to depart from your duty. I wiſh more was in my power, but for only begging for mercy to you I am cruelly treated. Think of your mother, who was an example of virtue and patience, and beſieve that while you do right, heaven will protect you. God preſerve you.

" Your affectionate aunt

" THE COUNTESS DE VRINGEN."

" *To the Baron de Bergzeyl's Daughter.*"

Ypſilanti muttered out the contents of this friendly billet with ſtammering trepidation. No one could clearly comprehend its import. Caſimir took it, and more firmly repeated it; then gratefully and reverentially preſſing it to his lips, he ſilently, ejaculated bleſſings on the angelic benevolence of the writer, and turned his thoughts towards profiting by the warning. Why he ſtared a few moments, with fixed attention, on the characters—why he reiterated the name it was ſigned with—why he felt an undeſcribable impetuoſity haſten all the circulation in his viens, and why he would have given the world to have known the Counteſs de Vringen, though it was all myſterious to himſelf, ſhall in due time be explained.

In his concern for the ſafety of his dear Ypſilanti all care for himſelf was entirely abſorbed; and he who but an hour before contemplated his approaching felicity with rapture and impatience, would now for the univerſe have interpoſed the delay of a moment. Dr. Buler and his wife, though diſappointed and vexed, facilitated the departure of their guests, with all the alacrity their ſituation required; and in leſs than an hour they were prepared to ſet off.

What ſhould become of Rhodolpha, whoſe preſence was really neceſſary to nobody, was referred to herſelf. She had it in her option either to return to her father, or accompany Ypſilanti.—Neither of theſe alternatives had any thing alluring in it. Her father was too juſt to be indulgent to a temper like hers; and her haraſſed friend had loſt with her aſſumed ſex, thoſe powers that repayed an attachment to her. Rodolpha therefore wavered, when deſired to make an election. There was, it is true, a middle courſe ſhe would have preferred, had the ſmalleſt encouragement been held out to her: this was the remaining with Mrs. Buler; for, like Sancho Panca, ſhe ſaw more charms in the good cheer prepared for a wedding, than in following the fortunes of an adventurer. It was mortifying to her, that Mrs. Buler did not ſeem to take the oblique hints ſhe threw out, of reluctance to quit her preſent ſituation. Rhodolpha had little force of attraction about her, though far from deficient perſonal beauty; and ſhe was ſuffered to decide at liberty on the path ſhe ſhould take.

In a pet at the little anxiety diſcovered about her, and the willingneſs all ſhewed to be rid of her, ſhe did what fooliſh, ill-tempered people

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are perpetually doing—she revenged the slight on herself, by chusing that which she liked least of all:—this was, to return to her father; but the ferment of her malice abating when she re-considered her choice, she repented of her folly, and prevailed on Madame Guemené to let her retract what she had said. It made a very small difference to those concerned; and for once she seemed desirous to shew she could receive a favour with gratitude.

They all set off, after returning due thanks to their kind host and hostess; and before day-light reached a post-town. The money the Countess de Vringen had furnished them with, and what Madame Guemené had received from the Baron de Bergzeyl for his daughter's use, warranted them in adopting the best mode of flight; and preferring England to Holland, they were making the best of their way towards Ostend. Ypsilanti not unhappy while with Casimir and Madame, for cheered by hope that the sight of the English shore would prove an antidote to their distresses: what was afterwards to become of them, was left to the revolution of time to discover. Perhaps it was the privation of all other comfort that made her fancy she foresaw an accommodation between the Baron and his wife's triumphant brother-in-law.

On a due calculation of time, distance, and chances, they began to look on themselves as certain of escaping, when the spirits of the nether regions whispered to Rhodolpha, that more was to be got by betraying her friend than sharing her fate. The reward the Countess de Vringen had mentioned in her billet as offered by her husband for delivering Ypsilanti up to him, was a tempt-

ing proſpect to one whoſe ideas excluded all but the moſt contemptible pleaſures. In ſilence, which her companions thought the reſult of wearineſs, and pitied as ſuch, ſhe ran over all the joys a thouſand florins would purchaſe her; and having laid a plan for obtaining them, ſhe, when they next ſtopt for a haſty refreſhment, found means to write three lines of information to the Count, with a promiſe that nothing on her part ſhould be wanting to make it uſeful to him. This ſhe put in a train of conveyance to him, and they again ſet off, no one in the leaſt ſuſpecting her.

It was her next *duty* to delay the fugitives by every petty art ſhe could deviſe; but her brother's attention was too forcibly directed to one object to heed her. She pretended exceſſive fatigue, and then played a ſick part; but all to no purpoſe. She ſoon found that were ſhe an impediment, her lot would be to remain behind, and that cruel Caſimir would make no ſcruple of leaving her at an inn, if by ſuch a ſacrifice he could ſecure Ypſilanti.

Her jealouſy was not diminiſhed by theſe proofs of her inferior powers; and ſuch was the increaſe of her hatred towards her rival, that ſhe would gladly have deſerted her, could ſhe have done it without injury to her beloved ſelf.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE elements at laſt ſeemed to take pity on Rhodolpha's nearly abortive ſcheme. When arrived at Oſtend, the weather was ſuch as forbade all attempts to croſs even the narrow ſea between that and England, and the diſtreſſed party were forced to wait in ſubmiſſion a change in their favour. A moment's pauſe gave love time to rally in the breaſt of Caſimir; and he intreated Ypſilanti to devote one hour of their ſtay to the ſacred purpoſe of uniting herſelf to him. The requeſt was diſtreſſing to her. The frame of her ſpirits ill ſuited ſuch a buſineſs. Her thoughts were wandering inceſſantly towards her father, and ſhe felt as if her marriage would be an abandoning of him. It was only dejection of ſpirits that introduced the idea; but Caſimir, unwilling to add a moment's uneaſineſs to that which already nearly overpowered her, when he ſaw ſhe was reluctant, deſiſted, and was content with her promiſe, that as ſoon as they reached a place of quiet in England, ſhe would be his. There it was propoſed he ſhould leave her, till the ſtorm of paſſion was a little blown over. He would return into France, whither

whither his profeſſion called him, and endeavour to ſettle her near him.

They had now been detained three long days at Oſtend. Caſimir early in the morning went to make his almoſt hourly enquiries about the probability of getting away, which an inceſſant hurricane rendered very precarious. Madame was not yet riſen. Ypſilanti and Rhodolpha were ſitting together; the one in placid, the other in ſullen ſadneſs, when they were alarmed by the appearance of a man on horſeback before the windows of the inn, who in a tone that forbade all hope of mercy or eſcape, enquired if there was not in the houſe an elderly woman, two young women, and a young man, who were going to embark for England. The people of the houſe unheſitatingly anſwered in the affirmative, on which the man, in a ſtill more menacing voice, commanded, in the name of the Count de Vringen, that they ſhould be detained, adding, that the Count's eldeſt ſon was coming up to ſecure them. Pronouncing theſe words, he caſt his eyes up towards the window at which were Ypſilanti and her falſe friend; and perhaps gueſſing by their appearance that they were the perſons he was in queſt of, he wanted no further information; nor did the ſhadow of hope remain to comfort the unfortunate object of his purſuit.

Hampered like a bird in a net and ſtruggling to eſcape, fear prompted her to try to get out of the houſe, but her dear Madam Guemené was abſent, and without her ſhe would not attempt to fly. Rhodolpha, far more calm, tried to ſoothe her into patience, and to detain her where ſhe was, for a few critical minutes.

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The ſound of an approaching footſtep drove the almoſt-diſtracted girl to deſperation; and regardleſs of all conſideration, ſhe acted as nature impelled her, and made towards a further door, which ſhe had ſcarcely touched to prevent immediate ruin, when ſhe met Madame coming to her, ignorant of what was paſſing. She could only intreat her to follow her, and then ſeeing a narrow dark ſtair-caſe before her, truſting to chance whither it ſhould lead her, ſhe dragged her companion down it.

The vigilance of her enemies had been ſo entirely directed towards the room they knew ſhe was in, that they had taken no care to guard any other part of the houſe. The *avant-courier*, whoſe coming had firſt given the alarm, had no power to do more than detain the Baron de Bergzeyl's daughter till the young vindictive Count could come up. He had therefore contented himſelf with locking the door he met with on his approach, and by this means, Ypſilanti having faſtened that ſhe had eſcaped by, poor Rhodolpha was made a priſoner, and depended ſolely on her ability to ſet the Count right for eſcaping all the puniſhments awaiting Ypſilanti, who had fortunately gained the ſtreet unobſerved, met with Caſimir, and with him gone on board a veſſel for England, the maſter of which aſſured them of his protection, and their perfect ſecurity, as no power on earth durſt touch them while there.

Had propitious gales now favoured them, they might have defied the Count, and left their inſidious enemy, Rhodolpha, to the puniſhment ſhe merited; but the wind was tempeſtuous, and directly in their teeth, and neither Caſimir nor Ypſilanti could think of their further ſecurity while the

the unſuſpected, though unamiable Rhodolpha was left behind. They hoped ſhe would gueſs whither they had betaken themſelves, and join them; but the day elapſing without tidings of her, her brother's humanity could reſt no longer, and he ventured on ſhore to ſeek her. Scarcely was he gone, when Ypſilanti was afreſh alarmed: how, we muſt recede a few ſteps to relate.

The fugitives had reached the veſſel more than an hour before Count Herman Vringen arrived at the inn, all which ſeeming century Rhodolpha paſſed in durance, from which ſhe found all endeavours to releaſe herſelf inefficacious. She had tried what opening the window and calling to the people below would do for her: ſhe had times without number aſſured them ſhe was a friend to their cauſe, and that the perſon they were in ſearch of had eſcaped; but the more vehement ſhe was in theſe proteſtations, the more diſpoſed all who heard her were to believe it a mere artifice to get her liberty; and the Count's meſſenger having briefly related the impoſition by which his maſter had ſuffered, juſtice was evidently on his ſide, and the mob were ready to aſſiſt him.

Count Herman delighted, not only with the revenge he thought in his power, but inflated with his new acquiſition of rank and fortune, and with the popular attention he excited, as ſoon as he arrived flew to the cage, where he ſuppoſed his prey confined, and with his foot burſting open the door, ſaw Rhodolpha, whom, as being a ſtranger to both their perſons, and having only heard that the Baron's daughter was handſome, and his eyes informing him that this young woman was ſo, he took for her.

her. Impatient of her confinement, fretting at it, and heartily vexed that she who was to have fallen by her treachery had beguiled her of the reward annexed to its success, she received Count Herman with no pleasant countenance; and hastily endeavouring to convince him, not so much that Ypsilanti had escaped, or that she had used every method in her power to fulfil her engagement, she stuttered and stammered to such a degree, that he instantly concluded she was manufacturing a falsehood.

Impressed only with the idea that she was the delinquent he was in pursuit of, he, without regarding a word she said, seized her, and in the harshest language insisted on her consenting to accompany him quietly. Poor Rhodolpha, now dropping on her knees, intreated his patience; but patience he had none. He ordered her hands to be tied behind her, and her shoes to be taken away; and then leaving her again in durance, he retired to get some hasty refreshment.

In this time his captive was left to the entertainment of her own contemplations. Having an inceſſantly active mind, they seldom rested long on a subject; and her natural selfishness always operating towards the exhilaration of her spirits, she began to soothe her sorrows by endeavouring to reconcile herself to her fate. To quit her clamour, the Count, stigmatising her at the outset of his speech with the encouraging vocative of fool, had told her she had nothing to apprehend unless the Baron proved refractory in the article of restitution. From what she had seen and heard, she inferred that he was disposed to submission, and not considering that it was out of his power to

refund as completely as his tyrannical enemies in their greedineſs would moſt probably inſiſt on, ſhe began to aſk herſelf whether her ſituation, even when ſuffering under this miſtake, might not be as tolerable as the precarious and hazardous alternative of remaining with Ypſilanti and her brother, who ſhe knew muſt ſoon feel the pinching of that poverty ſhe had too often experienced and murmured at while at her father's.

Another hope roſe to her conſolation. She knew the power of female charms; and ſhe was fully aware that nature had on the ſcore of beauty been no niggard to her. If her features wanted the delicacy, and her countenance the tender expreſſion of Ypſilanti's, ſhe had always thought this abundantly atoned for by her own prominent lovelineſs, and the command her aſpect carried with it. What was too ſtrongly lined to her viſage, ſelf-approbation taught her to call *force of beauty*, and what was maſculine in her perſon was in her idea *dignity*. Cheared by the recollection of theſe poſſeſſions, and by the probable uſe ſhe might adapt them to, ſhe ſought round the room for a glaſs to appeal to, and to dreſs her looks by, but none offering itſelf, ſhe was forced to truſt her own judgment, and by ſtriving to calm her mind, hoped to adorn her countenance.

The Count preſently returned to her; and ſhe began her new ſyſtem by receiving him in the acquieſcence of voluntary ſubmiſſion. Having now leiſure from her own agitations to obſerve the perſon of her conqueror, ſhe ſaw not only nothing to diſapprove, but whatever could encourage her to make an attack on his heart. Such a change had half an hour wrought in her ſentiments,

ments, that now the greateſt puniſhment he could have inflicted on her would have been the ſuffering her to ſet him right in his miſtake. Her language now convinced him he had not miſtaken his game. He hurried her to his carriage as ſoon as his attendants were ready; and in all the pride of power to be cruel, he ſet off with his captive for his father's caſtle.

Count Herman, to a variety of unamiable qualities, and a vindictive ſpirit, added a ſolicitude for ſelf-gratification not at all inferior to Rhodolpha's; but in proportion to his means of indulging it, far more active. Revenge of the injury his intereſts had particularly received by the Baron de Bergzeyl's fraud, would of itſelf have been ſufficient to ſtimulate him to whatever could inſult his ſuppoſed daughter. Another part of his character made a very ſmall ſtock of female beauty a powerful incendiary in his breaſt. Two cauſes therefore combining in the preſent inſtance, and uniting ſo cloſely as to make a diſtinction difficult, produced in him a blended paſſion of love and hatred, which prompted him to whatever the firſt dictated, without putting the leaſt reſtraint on the other.

Rhodolpha ſoon perceived the effect of her well-directed charms; and comforting herſelf that they muſt of neceſſity be ſome days on the road, ſhe hoped when ſhe reached Vringen to lead her tyrant her captive. Her imagination pranced on without regard to obſtacles to what ſhe decided muſt be the *finale* of this amorous drama. Count Herman was in love with her; he would certainly marry her, and ſhe ſhould in the end ſhare the relinquiſhed inheritance of the fallen Ypſilanti. Scarcely an article of the good

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things ſhe knew to be depoſited at Hoenſdern, eſcaped the muſter her memory now produced. She ſettled in her mind every point of her enjoyments, and practiſed in idea all the inſolence ſhe conceived to belong to ſo elevated and ſo delightful a ſituation.

Having nothing to guide her but her own inexperience, ſhe ſuppoſed the only certain method to obtain theſe great ends, was to meet the Count in every favourable ſentiment he expreſſed towards her. Situation and temper had ſoon brought him to the point ſhe thought of infallible ſucceſs to her. He avowed himſelf, though not in the ſubmiſſive terms of humble love, but rather with the denunciations of incontrovertible will and authority, her admirer, and without making any promiſe of reward, demanded a return of his affection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

IT is a point agreed on univerſally, that there are to be found in the varieties of human nature, minds ſo correctly formed by nature, as to be capable intuitively of all the excellence education produces in others. As if intended for archetypes, from which toiling mortals are to copy, they ſpurn all ſubmiſſion to inſtruction, and ſoaring above all diſcipline, reach ſuch a height of perfection, as the moſt ſedulous rarely attain. Something ſimilar, and yet perfectly contrary, was the attribute of Rhodolpha. Brought up in the knowledge of nothing that would not have forwarded virtue, wherever its ſeeds had been once ſown, there nevertheleſs germinated in her compoſition the firſt principles of the baſeſt propenſities; and as if effect could dictate means, theſe evil diſpoſitions had furniſhed her with the arts of vice, and made her, though ſecluded from all power of imitation, malicious, paraſitical, and coquettiſh, as often as her various neceſſities or wiſhes called on thoſe hateful qualities

for

for furtherance. Under circumſtances, therefore, entirely new to her, ſhe yet practiſed the cunning of the moſt experienced; and, while ſhe ſaid not an encouraging word in reply to Count Herman's inſulting love, every feature, nay every minute particle that compoſed her features, forbade him to deſpair. The parties were ſoon on terms of amity—ſhe not remembering, and he not for a moment forgetting ſhe was his priſoner. Preliminaries there were none to ſettle. The ideal Counteſs of Hoenſdern looked on the courſe of events her fancy had marked out as immoveably decreed; and on the third day of their travelling together, ſeemed to hint ſhe had purchaſed a right to tyranniſe over her tyrant.

But there was now, to a leſs hood-winked obſerver, a manifeſt difference in the behaviour of Count Herman towards the lady, and ſuch as might have made all her ærial edifices totter, had ſhe once tried their foundation. He began to think his prize a burden, and to find out that ſhe was unamiable. In ſhort, he was tired of her, and too much relieved by the proſpect of reaching Vringen the next day to give way to the artifices ſhe was putting in practice to detain him on the road.

The laſt evening of their journey, they ſtopped at a very poor inn, where they muſt paſs the night. A ſupper, the beſt the houſe afforded, was ordered, and they ſat down to it. Scarcely were they placed at table, when a meſſage was brought to the Count, that a Phyſician travelling that road, and obliged to put up there for the night, was diſtreſſed, as the inn was full, for a room to ſup in, and would eſteem it a particular condeſcenſion, if Count Herman Vringen would

would allow him a place at his table. Rhodolpha, never deficient in promptitude, took on herſelf to anſwer the requeſt, by a poſitive unqualified refuſal. If the Count had not more morality he had more politeneſs: he granted the favour handſomely, and not pleaſed with the forward preſumption of his *protegée*, checked her for it in very diſcouraging terms. They ſquabbled on the queſtion of *right* and no *right*, till the door opened; and who ſhould enter but Rhodolpha's *quondam* acquaintance, Dr. Buler!

It was not quite the neceſſity his meſſage imported that had induced the doctor to beg admiſſion. On his enquiry who were in the inn, he had learnt, with heart-felt concern, that Count Herman Vringen was there on his way home with a daughter of the Baron de Bergzeyl. His friendſhip for her had prompted him to try what might be done to reſcue her from the oppreſſion that awaited her, or at leaſt to mitigate it; and thinking the ſight of one intereſted by genuine humanity in her ſufferings, might cheer her, he had by this innocent artifice introduced himſelf.

What then could exceed his ſurpriſe when he ſaw, not Ypſilanti de Bergzeyl, but Rhodolpha Luſinguen, ſitting at ſupper with the Count? She had never been a favourite with him, nor was ſhe at all diſpoſed to ſee attractions in his penetration. Another circumſtance, too, made her leſs ready in welcoming him. While at his houſe, ſhe had, in ſome trifling experiments, exerciſed her dexterity in pilfering; and in the moment of his entering, and her recogniſing him, her conſcience told her he was come to demand reſtitution.

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His ſurpriſe when his eyes corrected his expectations of the lady he ſhould find, was too honeſt and too great to be ſuppreſſed; and he had exclaimed, What! Rhodolpha Luſinguen! before he could recollect that, perhaps, it was the beſt method of ſecuring her he moſt valued to ſuffer the Count to go off with a miſtaken captive. She who, when at Oſtend, would have given worlds for ſo uſeful an evidence of her own identy, now bit her lips in vexation; and her diſpoſition to falſehood exceeding all her powers, ſhe did not heſitate to tell Dr. Buler he was in an error, for that ſhe was Yſilanti de Bergzeyl.

All the force of medical gravity was not ſufficient to prevent the Doctor's laughing at the ſtupendous abſurdity of Rhodolpha, if ſhe could imagine it poſſible to deceive him; but the lady not only ſtood the ridicule, but increaſed her firmneſs as her cauſe required it. Dr. Buler's paſſions were warm; and provoked at her aſſertions, he ſoon ſaid enough to ſilence her, and undeceive count Herman. A ſlight mention of ſome few petty deficiencies, and untoward diſcoveries, made after the haſty departure of his caſual gueſts, ſerved to convince the Count, that inſtead of Ypſilanti, of whoſe virtues he had heard much, he had picked up ſomething little better in rank, and worſe in principle, than an adventurer.

It was now become difficult for Count Herman, not only to decide what he ſhould do with her, but with himſelf. His firſt reſolution was, at all events to get rid of Rhodolpha, not one ſpark of his palled affection remaining to oppoſe the meaſure; but whether he ſhould return empty-handed to Vringen, or again ſeek the right perſon

ſon at Oſtend, was a queſtion he could not immediately reſolve.

After what had paſſed between Dr. Buler and the lady, nothing could prevail on the former to ſtay. He had, therefore, little noticed by the Count, and treated with contempt by his indignant fair, withdrawn without partaking of their table. They ſat down to a gloomy *tête-a-tête* repaſt; Rhodolpha by every art endeavouring to reinſtate herſelf in the Count's opinion, and he ſecretly deliberating on what ſhe had not the ſmalleſt concern in.

The conſequence of his ruminations was a reſolution to prefer eaſe to revenge he had little chance of gratifying; to leave the inn, if poſſible without his companion's knowledge, or if that was not feaſible, poſitively to refuſe being troubled with her any farther. He roſe in the morning without communicating a word of his intentions, left her faſt aſleep, locked her into her chamber, and before her nap was out, was within a few miles of his father's houſe.

Rhodolpha, the deſerted fair one, walked and roſe without ſuſpicion, perfectly ſatisfied in her own mind that ſhe had out-proteſted Dr. Buler, and convinced the Count that it was a mere artifice uſed to get her from him. She attempted to leave the room; and the diſcovery that ſhe was again a priſoner, was the firſt ſignal of alarm to her fears. Recollecting her ſituation, ſhe was ſoon reconciled to the terrifying circumſtance, as occaſioned, doubtleſs, by the Count's fears of loſing her; but when the people of the houſe anſwered her calls, releaſed her, and at the ſame time informed her of the perfect liberty ſhe enjoyed, ſhe was undeceived and furious with rage.

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The moſt opprobrious languge, interrupted only by tears of paſſion, was inſufficient to expreſs her reſentment, and, it muſt be confeſſed, well-founded indignation, ſince the deſertion of her was attended with every circumſtance that could wound her pride, and render the ſafety of her dear ſelf precarious.

She did not long remain in this forlorn ſituation. It is obſerved that kindneſſes are often received from ſtrangers, when near relations or friends ſhrink from benevolent exertions; and wherever the diſtreſſed party reſembles our Rhodolpda, this rule will invariably hold good, ſince if any aſſiſtance is afforded, it muſt be the reſult of charity ſupported by ignorance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

THERE happened to be at this juncture in the inn an Engliſh family of diſtinction, who from motives of laudable curioſity had ſpent the ſummer in an extenſive continental tour, and were now, late in the autumn, returning home with their ſuite. Hearing only that a lady had been left behind by her travelling companion, they immediately ſent a meſſage requeſting to ſee her. Glad to catch at whatever could relieve her preſent diſtreſs, ſhe laid aſide the haughtineſs of the *Counteſs de Hoenſdern*, and followed the perſon ſent, as the humble miſerable Rhodolpha Luſinguen; for ſhe had ſmarted too recently for aſſuming, to take even the travelling title of Ypſilanti de Bergzeyl.

The friends ſhe had found were the Earl and Counteſs of Strethling. They had with them their only ſon, Lord Firnes, and his tutor; and all, in proportion to their abilities and ſituation, were diſpoſed to render the object of their attention every ſervice her peculiarly hard fate, as they deemed it, could claim. When introduced

to them, ſhe wore no appearance that could conciliate affection, unleſs its baſis were pity; for grief and rage had diſtorted her features: a want of change of apparel gave her a ſordid appearance; and riſing from her bed in ſome haſte, ſhe had not beſtowed all the ſolicitude poſſible to have improved her aſpect.

Blubbering like a whipt ſchool-boy, and ſtammering with the convulſions of her paſſions, all the attention her hearers could beſtow was neceſſary to make out the ſtory ſhe related. But not all the emotions the ſoul is ſubject to could put Rhodolpha Luſinguen entirely off her guard, where that loud monitor, ſelf-intereſt, interfered. Whatever could vilify Count Herman ſhe related, in a way that tacitly beſpoke the favour of the company; but not one word eſcaped her of the origin of the miſchief:—there was no confeſſion that ſhe had betrayed her friend to her own ruin. On the face of the narrative it appeared only that wicked Count Herman, when in queſt of Ypſilanti de Bergzeyl, had caſually chanced on her, had taken her for the object of his father's vengeance, had forcibly compelled her to return with him, and from what cauſe ſhe knew not, unleſs he judged it the ſeverer puniſhment, had deſerted her on the road, where, as ſhe was entirely deſtitute of money and friends, he undoubtedly deſigned ſhe ſhould periſh.

Lady Strethling's eyes giſtened at the piteous tale. Rhodolpha received all the comforts of kind words, and a promiſe that nothing ſhould be omitted that could relieve her. The conſtitution of her mind was preſently its cordial. She began to hope, that inſtead of a worſe ſituation ſhe had found a better; and all remembrance of the

the Counteſs de Hoenſdern having vaniſhed with Count Herman, ſhe left him to aſſume his new title by himſelf, and ſince ſhe could not be revenged on him, determined to think no more of him.

When all the conſolation her caſe and the time admitted, had been offered her, it was propoſed to her to chuſe how her new friends ſhould aſſiſt her farther. They ſeemed to diſregard all trouble or inconvenience, and would have gone out of the road any diſtance to have placed her in ſafety. Rhodolpha thanked them for their goodneſs; but wiſhed it had included the alternative of remaining with them. Germany was not an air ſhe particularly deſired to breathe, while the Vringen family had it in their power to divulge her treachery, and Count Herman could boaſt the gentle pliancy of her temper. She cared little about her brother or Ypſilanti:—ſhe had no reaſon to ſhun them; and therefore had no averſion to England, for which country ſhe ſuppoſed them at leaſt ſailed. But there was a ſtronger incentive than any thing of this ſort to her attaching herſelf to her new friends. Lord Firnes, ſhe ſoon conceived might prove an excellent ſucceſſor to Count Herman Vringen; and as he had been behind no one of the family in his conſolation, and the warm feelings of youth had given to all he did or uttered a peculiar characteriſtic energy, ſhe was not without hopes of having already tranſfixed his heart.

When aſked therefore if ſhe had parents or relations to whom ſhe might be conveyed, ſhe replied not poſitively by a negative but by ſignificant geſtures and indications of mental agony at

the recollection, calculated to intereſt her protectors for her as a friendleſs creature; and her artifices ſoon without one falſe aſſertion, made Lord and Lady Strethling, their ſon and his tutor, all ſuppoſe her an orphan born to wealth, but early robbed of it by the griping hand of adverſity.

Of her brother ſhe ſpoke more freely, becauſe there was a poſſibility of his ſtill being at Oſtend, or at leaſt, that as her new friends were deſtined for England, ſome untoward rencontre might fall out and betray her. Againſt all this her lively ingenunity had abundantly furniſhed her, and ſhe ſucceeded ſo well in her preſent endeavours as, by diſowning every ſupport in her diſtreſſes, to throw herſelf entirely on the Earl and Counteſs, perſons not at all inclined to let her ſink.

Nothing was omitted by theſe benevolent people that could alleviate misfortunes ſo uncommon in ſo early a period of life; and Rhodolpha, more joyous at her heart than ſhe dared ſuffer herſelf to avow, ſet off with them, placed in their travelling coach between Lord Firnes and his tutor, and oppoſite Lord and Lady Strethling. But this ſituation did not long ſuit her deſigns. She could not be ſuch a niggard of her beauty as to treat the young gentleman with only a partial view of it. She grew uneaſy, feigned indiſpoſition, and preſently procured from Lady Strethling's attention a remove to a more *commanding* ſituation.

Lord Firnes, unfortunately for Rhodolpha, was of a diſpoſition very ill ſuited to the promotion of her views. The conduct of his parents,

rents, who had no other child, and whoſe ſtrength of judgment in no inſtance equalled the benevolence of their hearts, had been more than ſufficient to have ruined him; it had been indulgent to a criminal exceſs, and careful to a degree of care that made him ridiculous. To oppoſe this ſeducing calamity, he had in his own mind a ſpecies of manly firmneſs never amounting to obſtinacy; and an ambition to reſemble thoſe perſons, and to attain thoſe diſtinctions, that are beſt worth imitation and purſuit. In his tutor he poſſeſſed whatever could make up the deficiency of his own inexperience, and though travelling under ſome circumſtances that tend rather to attach ridicule to a young man's character, he had by his uncommon good qualities gained univerſal eſteem, and by his very ſuperior attainments in knowledge, univerſal applauſe in all the places he had viſited.

The natural goodneſs of his nature might at firſt miſlead Rhodolpha to imagine him duly fitted for the poſt of her dupe; but ſhe was ignorant that however viſible the aperture of of his heart might be, it was internally fenced with a ſcrupulous delicacy that would never ſuffer the admiſſion of any thing that had not undergone the niceſt ſcrutiny. To the paſſion ſhe wiſhed to infuſe infuſe into him he was utterly a ſtranger; and when the firſt affection of his humanity had ſubſided, ſhe ſaw little remaining to chear her in her views. Lord Firnes was not to be caught by the glare of beauty or by common allurements; and notwith-

ſtanding in the courſe of her journey ſhe threw herſelf at every opportunity in his way, ſhe ſaw that, unleſs perſeverance and her utmoſt endeavours to accommodate herſelf to his taſte ſucceeded better than what ſhe had more depended on, ſhe had little chance here for being a Counteſs of their family.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

THEY reached Oſtend in due time, and without any addition to Rhodolpha's misfortunes. She had hoped as they travelled ſlowly, her brother and his party muſt have ſailed; but here ſhe was diſappointed; and as her kind friends were impatient to get to England, there was no chance for her avoiding them. Ypſilanti's terrors and diſtreſſes had affected her health too violently to admit of her preferring any thing to reſt. They had therefore left the veſſel in which they had ſheltered themſelves, had been accommodated by the maſter of it, who had been obliged to ſail without them, with his houſe on ſhore, and were now waiting for the packet which would be ready to convey them the next day.

Rhodolpha was welcomed by Caſimir, Ypſilanti, and Guemené, not in proportion to her merit, but their anxiety for her ſafety; and in their joy at her return, they ſeemed to forget how far ſhort of peace they themſelves were. Nothing paſſed in their firſt interview or afterwards that could at all inform Lord and Lady Strethling, or their keener-ſighted ſon and his tutor of the conſtitutional demerit of her they

had ſo generouſly befriended. As much gratitude was expreſſed for their benevolent interpoſition as if Rhodolpha had been worth it, as parents when in danger of loſing even an untoward child, forget in their prayers for its recovery, that it may live to make their hearts ache, and when they ſee it reſtored to health cheriſh it with undiſtinguiſhing fondneſs.

The active exertions of the Engliſh family did not ſtop at the reſtoration of Rhodolpha to her party. They propoſed joining companies in their ſhort paſſage; and ſeeing enough of the three perſons they had found at Oſtend to conciliate their affections, while a brief and guarded relation of their diſtreſſes awakened the moſt generous ſympathy, they offered the females an aſſylum at their ſeat in Eaſt Kent, while Caſimir arranged matters for their ſettlement with him in France, politely and very cordially adding to this hoſpitable offer a wiſh, that as they knew how Captain Luſinguen and Ypſilanti were circumſtanced, their houſe might be the ſcene of their union.

In kindneſs ſuch as this, and in the joy of ſeeing poor, pitied Rhodolpha once more ſafe, Ypſilanti nearly loſt the ſenſe of her diſtreſſed ſituation; and a confirmed rumour ſpreading, that the Baron de Bergzeyl had mortified his purſuers by eſcaping ſafe into Italy, was a cordial to her ſpirits, and added to her ſatisfaction in ſailing the next evening with a fair wind and a cloudleſs atmoſphere.

They expected to reach the Engliſh ſhore early in the following afternoon, and now had little concern but that of making the time paſs pleaſantly—no difficult taſk with perſons ſo diſ-

poſed

poſed and ſo qualified. But this calm was but the harbinger of ſomething more dreadful than all they had yet encountered. In the dead of the night the veſſel accidentally caught fire; the alarm was inſtantly ſpread; the paſſengers were awakened from their firſt ſlumbers; the boat was got in readineſs; and they were adviſed to haſten to it, as it was doubtful if the flames could be extinguiſhed till the ſurface of the ſea ſtopped them. Caſimir's firſt care was for Ypſilanti, her's for Madame Guemené, who, in deſcending from the ſhip's ſide, terrified and almoſt powerleſs with fear, miſſed her hold, and was heard to fall into the water. Caſimir, who was aſſiſting her, had for the ſake of greater activity ſtripped off his coat, and now inſtantly plunged to ſave her. The riſing moon gave a faint light, as if only to illuminate the ſpot of horror; and Ypſilanti almoſt in the ſame inſtant ſaw the protector of her youth and her lover ſink together. Of all farther accumulation of miſery ſhe was incapable. The flames being almoſt immediately extinguiſhed, the paſſengers were called on to return. Ypſilanti was borne to the cabin; every endeavour to reſtore her was for a long while uſeleſs, and when at laſt effectual, the ſtate ſhe recovered to proved it to have been greater cruelty to revive her than to have ſuffered her to ſink into the only quiet that remained for her.

The loſs of Madame Guemené, to whom from her earlieſt remembrance ſhe had been attached, and whoſe maternal attentions ſhe had uniformly acknowledged by the ſincereſt gratitude and perſonal affection, was of itſelf, and particularly in her forlorn circumſtances, a ſcarcely ſupportable misfortune; but the ſenſe of it was

in a great meaſure abſorbed in the immeaſurably greater evil. For the loſs of her *friend* her *mind* was ſorely wounded; but every thing that affected him to whom her heart had dedicated its firſt paſſion, ſeemed to reach the ſeat of more exquiſite ſenſibility; and now that ſhe had for ever loſt him, that accident had ſnatched him from her, without warning of the blow that awaited her, ſhe was wretched beyond all the miſery of this world.

She had ſhewn moderation of ſpirits when in the height of proſperity. In the privation of almoſt all tranſient enjoyments ſhe had evinced a mind ſuperior to the ſhocks of fortune; but here ſhe was ſtruck in a part whoſe tender balance and trembling delicay of conſtruction formed the perfection of her character; yet ſtill was Ypſilanti amiable. When the firſt tranſports of her grief were over, meek ſubmiſſion was the characteriſtic of her ſorrow; and while her aſſiduous friends ſtrove to the utmoſt to mitigate it, ſhe was far better conſoled by the inward conviction that her miſery would ſoon find its own cure, and in a ſpeedy death unite her to the beloved object of her mourning.

On their landing at Brighton it was found impoſſible, without danger to her life, to attempt conveying her farther. Rhodolpha, whoſe grief for the loſs of her brother was either overcome by her regard for her friend or for herſelf, was the only one of the party that urged the experiment. At Brighton they were not very comfortably lodged, at leaſt not ſo well in her idea as they ſhould be at Lord Strethling's ſeat; and having naturally a ſtrong *penchant* towards the hoſpitable abundance of a great houſe, ſhe relied on

it

it for Ypſilanti's recovery, if ſhe cared at all about it.

But nothing could influence the reſt of the party to her way of thinking. They omitted nothing that could reſtore the ſufferer, and waited with the moſt friendly patience the effect of their conſolations. Medicine had little efficacy; nor had the kind exhortations of the Earl and Counteſs to be comforted, much more power. She thought, and perhaps ſhe thought correctly, they could have no idea of her loſs, if they mentioned the poſſibility of comfort. Her improved underſtanding ſupplying her want of general obſervation, taught her that the misfortunes of this life are not to us what they are in themſelves, but what we make them; and ſhe rightly judged, that few know what it is to have the firſt bloſſoms of firſt attachments cut off by the nibbing fingers of adverſity.

Sinking thereby before all attempts to ſave herſelf, the grave muſt ſoon have ſhielded her from added woe, had ſhe not met in Lord Firnes's mind that ſympathy and thoſe powers that alone could medicine her ſpecies of grief. As being nearly of her own age, ſhe could not reject his counſel, as fitted only to a ſeaſon when the paſſions have loſt their predominance. In the ſhort time of their acquaintance, he had perceived much of Caſimir's conciliating diſpoſition, and affection towards him inſtantly ſprung up in his boſom.—Though inſenſible to the ſnares Rodolpha had laid for him, he was far far from invulnerable by the ſhaft of love. He was nice in his ſelection, and had as yet ſeen no lady that he at once choſe and dared to let his thoughts reſt on; but he had a ſpirit tuned to every ſentiment that harmonizes

harmonizes without enervating; and he felt in all its force, not only Ypſilanti's loſs, but her ſenſation of it.

Here was the balm her ſorrows wanted. He would ſpend hours with her, and inſtructed by the artleſs guidance of his own correct feelings, would tenderly probe, and then endeavour to cloſe the gaping wounds of her breaſt. Much he certainly effected; but much yet remained to be done, when informed by Rhodolpha of every inconvenience ſhe ſubjected the family to, by detaining them, ſhe, to the perfect ſatisfaction of her ſtoic friend, declared herſelf, after a halt of near three weeks, able to reſume the journey.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

ON their arrival at St. Leonard's Park, Lord Strethling's Kentiſh reſidence, the two foreign ladies became ſubjects of converſation and curioſity. Fame blazed abroad the beauty of Rhodolpha, and whiſpered the misfortunes of Ypſilanti. The former was at firſt viſible to all comers; the latter was ſeen by no one but the family. Rhodolpha, confident and forward, was intoxicated with the admiration ſhe attracted, while Ypſilanti, who in her blighter days had charmed without effort, ſickened at the idea of ſociety, and now ſhe had loſt him whom alone ſhe wiſhed to pleaſe, heard of the neigbourhood as of a foreign land, and ſecluded herſelf as if jealous of the little quiet her cruel fate had left her.

Hitherto they had ſuffered no inconvenience from want of language. Lord and Lady Strethling ſpoke French, which Madame Guemené had made perfectly familiar to them, and Lord Firnes and his tutor added to this knowledge an intimate acquaintance with the German. Rhodolpha was the firſt of the two to feel a deficiency; but as ſhe wanted not for talents, promptitude, or courage, and was extremely deſirous of removing all impediments to a profitable acquaintance, ſhe promiſed

promiſed to be not long at a loſs. She hinted a wiſh that Lord Firnes would take on himſelf the office of her inſtructor. He declined it politely; and ſhe could ſcarcely forbear replying by a look of contempt at his inſenſibility.

It had been Lord and Lady Strethling's plan, after remaining a few weeks at St. Leonard's, to go to their houſe in town. Their ſon was nearly of age; the feſtive day was to have been celebrated in the country, and he then was to have made his *debut* in active life; but the ſorrows of a ſtranger had power over his benevolent family to reſtrain all their joys. Lord Firnes's birth-day was kept in privacy, leſt poor Ypſilanti's feelings ſhould be hurt by diſſonant ſounds of mirth. The counteſs determined to remain with her in Kent, and the Earl felt no inclination to viſit London ſooner, or abide there longer than his duty and the proper introduction of his ſon required.

Week ſucceeded week, and Ypſilanti was ſtill in deep though tranquil affliction. Chriſtmas came, and it was fit that Lord Firnes's removal to town ſhould be thought on. The day was fixed, and the immediate alteration perceptible in him evinced better than any other declaration could have done, that in his ſympathy for Ypſilanti he had imbibed a paſſion which made all other conſiderations appear trivial, and his leaving her, had it been to take poſſeſſion of a kingdom, too galling to be borne.

He ſickened, confined himſelf, firſt to the houſe, and then to his chamber, ſeemed diſpoſed to admit no one to his confidence, and to chuſe to be miſerable. Ypſilanti, unconſcious of her power,

power, and feeling only that it was her duty to return his many kindneſſes by an exertion to cheer him, however painful it might be, rouſed herſelf from her lethargy of grief, and while ſhe fancied ſhe lightened his malady, knew not ſhe was increaſing it.

Perhaps had the Earl and Counteſs ſeen their ſon's aggrandiſement in an union with their unhappy *protegeé*, their perceptive faculties would have been clearer. Certain it is that they did not at all gueſs whence his ailment proceeded. Mr. Griffin, till now Lord Firnes's tutor, and from the time of his coming of age his friend, poſſeſſed more unclouded ſagacity; but deliberating what courſe he ſhould take in ſo nice a buſineſs, was ſilent and perplexed. Rhodolpha's intriguing ſpirit always prompted her to ſuppoſe more than was apparent in every occurrence. Love or ſelf-intereſt ſhe thought every action might be deduced from: for the latter there was no room here; ſhe therefore adopted the former, and for once was right in her ſuſpicion.

But her particular views rendered her penetration as well as Mr. Griffin's uſeleſs and harmleſs to all. She had not yet given up her deſign on Lord Firnes; and every conſideration of regard for herſelf ſtimulating her, ſhe had already put in practice the whole ſucceſſion of common female arts.

Her ſhort abode with Count Herman Vringen, and the path her *prudence* had marked out to her as moſt likely to ſecure him to her, had, however ſhe was diſpoſed to forget what now made rather againſt her, recorded itſelf indelibly, and almoſt

almoſt obviouſly. In relating what had paſſed in her forced abſence from Ypſilanti, ſhe had ſunk this *trivial* circumſtance, and no one had entertained the leaſt ſuſpicion of it. Nothing but the buoyant confidence of a Rhodolpha Luſinguen could have ſupported her under the conviction that now obtruded itſelf on her mind. Ruin and diſgrace the moſt poignant ſtared her in the face: ſhe had no reaſon to expect a better fate than being turned out of Lord Strethling's houſe in a very ſhort time, and of ſtarving, unleſs they had the charity to return her to her father—an alternative ſhe would ſcarcely have accepted.

However terrifying this approaching calamity and conſequent horror might be, the malice of her nature taught her, that altogether it was a misfortune inferior to the agony of leaving Ypſilanti in the poſſeſſion of the kindneſs ſhe had forfeited, and perhaps in a train for regaining comfort. She was convinced Lord Firnes was ſeriouſly attached to her: ſhe could not comprehend ſuch exalted virtue as refuſing ſuch a ſituation out of regard to the memory of another. She believed Ypſilanti would be flattered by the offer, accept it gladly, though perhaps with ſome grimace of reluctance, and that it was out of her power to prevent the miſery of ſeeing herſelf the only one excluded from a ſhare in Fortune's good humour.

Lord Firnes himſelf ſeemed to judge far otherwiſe than Rhodolpha of the condition of his hopes; and continuing in a ſtate of languor and feveriſh ſpirits that made every one ſolicitous about him, Mr. Griffin at laſt, when he had been drooping

drooping near a month, ventured to hint his ſuſpicions to him, and to offer him aſſiſtance in any method he could purſue for the recovery of his health. Lord Firnes heard him with agitation that inſtantly confirmed the conjecture. Mr. Griffin was neither diſpoſed to blame nor thwart this very juſtifiable and almoſt inevitable attachment. He comforted him by telling him he ſhould have thought him deficient in ſenſibility had this affection not ſucceeded his acquaintance with a being ſo formed to conciliate love and eſteem as the charming Ypſilanti. Well knowing Lord and Lady Strethling's diſpoſition to exceſſive indulgence, and their predilection in favour of the object of his regard, he encouraged him to avow it, or ſhould that be more than his Lordſhip's extreme intereſt in the buſineſs would admit of, he offered to communicate it to them with every recommendation he could annex to it.

His amiable pupil liſtened with all poſſible gratitude to friendſhip ſo encouraging; and as Mr. Griffin proceeded in his conſolation, now and then a ſpark of hope—a faint gleam of diſtant joy would dart into his pallid countenance. It was inſtantly checked by ſomething that ſeemed ſuperior to all conſiderations, and when his adviſer pauſed, he thanked him for his generous offer, acknowledged it of the utmoſt value—and yet declined it.

He ſaid he had no reaſon to doubt, that his father and mother would readily acquieſce in what was neceſſary to his peace, and that they would forego every other advantage for the ſake of it. Perhaps, as Mr. Griffin had ſuggeſted, he could not plead his cauſe himſelf: he would then certainly

certainly have availed himſelf of his interpoſition, and ſhould have looked confidently forward to ſucceſs; but there were obſtacles yet remaining which were not to be overcome, and ſuch as made him reſolve to ſuffer in ſilence. Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl herſelf he knew too well would oppoſe him.

"Have you any greater reaſon than conjecture for thinking ſo?" ſaid Mr. Griffin, interrupting him.

"No—but I am convinced of it."

"You cannot be convinced unleſs you have tried."

"I will never try."

"Then let me for you. Let me ſound her at a diſtance. Depend on me, I will do nothing that can embarraſs or degrade you; but at leaſt let me endeavour to find out how ſhe is diſpoſed. Who knows but your attachment to her might be the means of eraſing Captain Luſinguen from her remembrance, or at leaſt of enabling her to bear the loſs? Perhaps it is the only thing that can recover her. Come, my Lord, do not deſpair; let me try to ſerve you, and I will promiſe you ſhall not fail for want of exertion.—I ſhall rejoice to ſee you a huſband; and if Mademoiſelle does not at firſt make you a very *cheerful* wife, I ſhall pledge myſelf ſhe ſhall make you a very *amiable* one. Her ſorrow, depend on it, will wear off in time; and nothing can ſo well effect it as your attention, for I am ſure you are not diſagreeable to her.

As much as this, or half as much, would have encouraged moſt men in Lord Firnes's predicament; but it was all loſt upon him. "I am infinitely indebted to you," he replied, "for your zeal

zeal to promote my happineſs; but believe me, the utmoſt you could do for me would be of no avail. I conſider this dear young woman's ſorrow as ſacred; ſhe herſelf is a temple dedicated to grief; and were I to intrude with one ſtep or one word that bore any nearer an affinity to joy than rational comfort, I ſhould look on myſelf as guilty of the moſt impious profanation. I know I am not diſagreeable to her; I know more, I poſſeſs her friendſhip and her confidence; the whole of her diſtreſſes ſhe has entruſted me with, and we are bound indiſſolubly to each other by plighted amity and fidelity. So far am I from feeling any ground for hope in this favourable diſpoſition, that I conſider it as an inſuperable barrier to a more intimate connexion. Had ſhe not felt ſhe had nothing more to give, ſhe would never have thought herſelf ſafe in granting ſo much. The fear that I ſhould have preſumed to go one ſtep farther, would have precluded me from admittance, had not this been the extreme boundary of her favour, and from my intimate acquaintance with her, joined to obſervation, I am convinced that to mention my preſumptuous wiſhes would be entirely to forfeit what is more valuable to me than the poſſeſſion of her perſon. I have therefore taken my reſolution; and ſhould you, Griffin, in your anxiety for me, do any thing contrary to it, you forfeit my regard, and I will diſown every word you ſay."

Mr. Griffin, moved by the unaccuſtomed ſeverity of the Viſcount's looks, bowed in ſilence.

Lord Firnes inſtantly recollecting that he had ſpoken perhaps more poſitively than he wiſhed, endeavoured to atone for it and his rejection of Mr. Griffin's interpoſition, by profeſſing himſelf diſpoſed

diſpoſed to ſtruggle againſt a paſſion he ſeemed now to deſpiſe himſelf for ſubmitting to, and begging his friend's advice as to the means moſt likely to inſure him a victory.—Mr. Griffin adviſed—abſence.—Lord Firnes ſhuddered involuntarily, but in a few ſeconds confeſſed it a very wholeſome preſcription.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

THE *quid* being voted, the *quo* remained a ſubject of diſcuſſion, and could be dreſſed in no garb that his Lordſhip did not cavil at. All places, all ſchemes were equally objectionable. At laſt, after a long diſcuſſion, travelling was agreed to, and it was reſolved that Lord Firnes ſhould aſk Lord Strethling's permiſſion to viſit Rome with Mr. Griffin.

Diſcuſſion of this painful ſubject had produced a good effect on his mind. His fortitude was increaſed, and his family ignorantly fancied his health mending. Fondneſs ſuch as his parents bore him, could never heſitate in granting a requeſt made for the important purpoſe of reſtoring him. Preparations not only ſuited to his elevated rank, but calculated by the credit they would give him to raiſe his ſpirits, were inſtantly ſet about, and ſoon completed: the time of his abſence was to be regulated only by his own will, and the benefit to be derived from it; and his father and mother generouſly ſuppreſſed their own feel-

ings on his approaching departure, leſt they ſhould increaſe his gloom.

The agonies of his mind returned with redoubled violence as ſoon as his tranſient fortitude evaporated. It laſted but a few hours; only till he next ſaw Ypſilanti. Firm as he was in his opinion of her inſenſibility towards his paſſion, he could not but watch with eager curioſity how ſhe received the firſt tidings of his intended journey. Mr. Griffin mentioned it after dinner. Honeſt ſurpriſe and tender regret at once ſeated themſelves among her features, and in her eyes; and ſhe ſo ingenuouſly expreſſed her concern, that Lord Firnes, apparently reaſoning backwards, was confirmed in all his hopeleſs forebodings. "I thought," ſaid ſhe, wiping her eyes without the leaſt ſolicitude to conceal her tears, "I had ſuffered ſuch misfortunes as muſt have made all vexations appear light; but really, my Lord, if you go, I ſhall ſink again into the melancholy you took ſuch pains to get me out of. I ſhall feel as if I had loſt a brother, and God knows my ſituation is already forlorn enough."

Had ſhe now ſpoke French, Lord and Lady Strethling muſt have gueſſed from the emotion her reply excited in their ſon, how he ſtood affected towards her; but they being engaged with other company, Mr. Griffin had addreſſed himſelf to her, and ſhe had expreſſed her concern in German.—Lord Firnes quitted the room inſtantly. Mr. Griffin followed him, and tried to perſuade him to conſtrue all things to his own advantage; but though half choaked with the convulſion of his breaſt, he was ſtill immoveably reſolute, ordered every thing for his departure the day next but one following, and ſeemed now to have gained

gained, in a moſt conflicting ſtruggle, the maſtery he had on ſuch noble principles contended for.

His conduct entirely awed his anxious friend, Mr. Griffin, into a concurrence in his meaſures. The laſt day of his ſtay he prudently devoted to ſome diſtant viſits, and effectually, though apparently by chance, ſhunned his fortitude's ſtouteſt opponent, who gave way to her ſorrow in all her native ingenuouſneſs.

Rhodolpha had been for ſome time thoughtful, and as if perplexed; and as Lord Firnes's departure grew nigh, her uneaſineſs grew more and more evident. The heads of the family obſerved it, but did not chuſe to notice it. Ypſilanti ſaw it, and perhaps, like Lear, biaſſed by her own ſufferings to ſuppoſe every one's originated from a cauſe ſomewhat ſimilar, ſhe concluded Rhodolpha attached to Lord Firnes; and ſincerely pitied her.

But Rhodolpha's conſtraint aroſe not ſo much from a wounded heart as a teeming head. She ſaw her own ſituation deſperate; had formed abundance of ſchemes for its relief, all of which had proved abortive. Her ingenuity preſented her another chance: it was a deep game ſhe had to play, and required not only all her ſkill, but the utmoſt aid of good fortune, and the family had parted for the night, and Lord Firnes had bid Ypſilanti an adieu ſhe could anſwer only by tears, before Rhodolpha had hit on any thing feaſible to her purpoſe.

Ypſilanti and Rhodolpha retired to the chamber of the former for half an hour's goſſip. "I wiſh," ſays ſhe, "I had mentioned to Lord Firnes a requeſt I had to make him: he ſays he ſhall

ſhall be gone before I ſee him in the morning, and my fooliſh heart failed me ſo when he took leave, I could not name it."

"What is it?" ſaid Rhodolpha.

"Why it is," replied Ypſilanti, "that as he is going into Italy, he would make ſome enquiry after my dear father. I dare not aſk it before Lord and Lady Strethling, becauſe I have never told them where he is; and were I to get up in the morning on purpoſe to ſpeak to Lord Firnes, I know they will be up too, and ſo I ſhould have no opportunity. How ſhall I, dear Rhodolpha, contrive to get at him? ſuppoſing I were to write a note, and give it to his ſervant?"

Rhodolpha pauſed as if reconnoitring poſſibilities. Ypſilanti, impatient, repeated the propoſition.—No," ſaid her friend, "I can do better: he is not yet gone to his room, I will waylay him when I leave you, and will ſpeak to him."

"Will that be proper?—Do you not think it will look rather diſrepectful?"

"No, not at all. Beſide, my deareſt Ypſilanti, I myſelf want an opportunity to ſpeak to him. He ought not to ſhun me as he does, if he had any pity.—You will oblige me by making me your meſſenger."

Ypſilanti's ſuſpicions were inſtantly confirmed. Tears of genuine ſympathy and compaſſion ſtarted from her eyes; and with no other permiſſion, Rhodolpha ſet out on her errand.

She did not perform it quite in the way ſhe had propoſed. She went to Lord Firnes's chamber, and there waited his arrival. He did not keep her long in ſuſpenſe. She apologiſed, and preſented her requeſt, at the ſame time repeating the

the neceſſity of ſecrecy, leſt the Baron's retreat ſhould be diſcovered. Lord Firnes willingly undertook the embaſſy, and moved towards the door to let the lady out, who he could not conceive had any farther motive for ſtaying with him.

Rhodolpha was an excellent actreſs; ſhe had pretended great emotion in naming the Baron, and now repeating her injunction to ſecrecy, and adverting to Ypſilanti's ſituation, and having reached a convenient ſpot for her ſcheme, ſhe dropped in a ſeeming fit. Lord Firnes ſaved her from falling to the ground, and, exceſſively alarmed, called out, "Help, help; for God's ſake, ſome water." Ypſilanti heard his voice, and was running out of her apartment; but his lordſhip's valet was neareſt at hand, and two or three maid-ſervants happening to be within call, ſoon ran to his aſſiſtance. All together ruſhed to the room: the lady was ſoon recovered; and her firſt artful requeſt was, that neither Lord nor Lady Strethling might be informed of the accident. Lord Firnes had embarraſſed himſelf by his promiſe to keep ſecret the errand on which ſhe had come. Mr. Griffin had joined the attendants, and ſome explanation was due to him and Ypſilanti; but his Lordſhip, unuſed to diſguiſe, and really much diſturbed, ſeemed ſo confuſed, and heſitated ſo terribly, that his ſtory appeared very unſatisfactory. His ſaucy valet, who would gladly have advanced himſelf to the poſt of vice's prime miniſter about his maſter's perſon, and who had been exceſſively piqued at a rejection of his ſervices while abroad, went away with an exulting ſneer. Mr. Griffin, as if confident in his pupil's virtue, tried to make him clear himſelf; the maid-ſervants ſneaked off, and Ypſilanti, in the

utmoſt diſtreſs her ill-placed affection towards Rhodolpha could excite, ſhut herſelf into her chamber, and ſpent the night in agonies.

Rhodolpha the next day artfully accommodated her behaviour to the ſuſpicion ſhe wiſhed to excite. She avoided Ypſilanti, and when forced to come acroſs her, behaved as if conſcious of having offended, and deſirous to deprecate her wrath. Her more generous friend conſtrued all to her advantage, and conſidering her as an object of pity, and as by her conduct ſupplicating mercy, ſhe forbore even to hint at what paſſed, and ſeemed deſirous Rhodolpha herſelf ſhould forget it. So paſſed one week; and, excepting that the ſuppoſed delinquent's ſpirits were evidently hurt, Lord Firnes's abſence was the only difference perceptible in the houſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

THE attention of the Earl and Counteſs had been for ſome time ſo nearly engroſſed by concern for their ſon, that none of it had been left to perceive the change in Rhodolpha's appearance. Perhaps ſhe was now leſs ſolicitous to conceal it. Lord Firnes had not been gone many days, before ſuſpicion, but not at all affecting him, was excited in his mother's mind. She mentioned it to Lord Strethling; and then ſending for Ypſilanti alone into her dreſſing-room, ſhe queſtioned her. Ignorant and innocent, nothing but the accident on the night before Lord Firnes's departure, prevented her pledging herſelf for her Ladyſhip's being miſtaken; but now transfixed with horror, ſhe was incapable of uttering a word in her defence, and the whole power of the univerſe could not have compelled Ypſilanti to become her friend's accuſer.

Lady Strethling finding nothing was to be got from Ypſilanti, and fearful of advancing ſo heavy a charge againſt any one merely on the evidence of her own opinion, called up her woman, on whoſe judgment and prudence ſhe could rely;

and without ſaying any thing that could lead her, deſired to know whether there was or was not a manifeſt alteration in Mademoiſelle Luſinguen's perſon? "Undoubtedly, my Lady," replied the woman: "I have wondered your Ladyſhip has taken no notice of it before. We all ſaw it long before my young Lord went away; and when Mademoiſelle fainted away in his room, as Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl knows, we all imagined it would come out, and that his Lordſhip would not go abroad."

Lady Strethling changed colour, bit her lips, and having heard quite as much as ſhe could digeſt, diſmiſſed the ſervant, while poor Ypſilanti, whom her laſt words had ſomewhat involved in the myſterious buſineſs, ſat ſpeechleſs, and in the utmoſt confuſion and embarraſſment. After a pauſe of ſome minutes, which neither of the ladies ſeemed able to interrupt, ſhe begged the Counteſs to allow her at leaſt to exculpate herſelf, and to convince her that ſhe was as ignorant as herſelf of what they had now heard. But her ladyſhip was in too great perturbation to liſten to any thing, but the ſuggeſtions of her own tortured mind. She civilly deſired Ypſilanti to retire, and then went to conſult with the Earl what ſteps they ſhould purſue.

Rhodolpha was never deficient in that ſpecies of curioſity termed inquiſitiveneſs. As ſoon as Ypſilanti returned to her, ſhe eagerly queſtioned her as to the cauſe of lady Strethling's ſummons; but ſhe received little ſatisfaction, for it was not in her friend's nature to divulge what ſhe conſidered as more ſtabbing than a dagger.

They remained alone near two hours, the one by every art, and by ſome menaces, endeavouring

ing to extort the information ſhe longed for; the other ſtriving to ſatisfy her and get rid of her wearisome importunity, by aſſuring her ſhe would learn what ſhe wanted to know but too ſoon.

At length came a meſſage, requiring Mademoiſelle Luſinguen to attend the Counteſs. Her ſuſpicions that ſhe was the ſubject of attention were now confirmed; and muſtering all her ready firmneſs to ſupport her through a trial that required infinite power, ſhe confidently ſtood before her beneſactreſs, as if courting enquiry.

The reward ſhe had in her own idea annexed to this delicate enterprize, was ſuch as ſtimulated her abundantly. She hoped lord Fines would, however inclined he might be to refute the charge, find himſelf borne down by the collateral evidence of circumſtances, and that he would ſuffer himſelf, for the ſake of his character, to be terrified into marrying her. Should this, which was the height of her *moderate* ambition, fail, ſhe had no doubt that the Earl and Counteſs would willingly make her an ample compenſation, and purchaſe her ſecrecy at any price. In either caſe ſhe knew ſhe muſt be a gainer, and the neceſſity of gain was every day increaſing, and made particularly urgent by Ypſilanti's growing uneaſy under the reception of reiterated favours from lord and lady Strethling, and having expreſſed an earneſt deſire to attach herſelf once more to her father, let his ſituation be ever ſo forlorn. A renunciation of this kind was too repugnant to the feelings of Mademoiſelle Luſinguen to be recemmended by any principles. She foreſaw that in this caſe ſhe muſt return to her own home, where ſhe conceived every thing ſhe abhorred to inhabit.

In anſwering Lady Strethling's interrogatories, no one could charge her with criminating Lord Firnes. It was the teſtimony of the ſervant that impeached him; and it was only by implication that he was criminated. Rhodolpha, as if too fond of him even to complain, replied only by ſobs, tears, and downcaſt looks, wiſhing to Heaven ſhe had never entered Lord Strethling's doors, or ſeen Lord Firnes; that the ſame cruel ocean had ſwallowed her up that robbed her of her only defender, her dear brother; and affecting to blame only herſelf, whom nature had furniſhed with too much ſuſceptibility and credulity. All this ſpoke againſt Lord Firnes with infinitely more force than the moſt virulent accuſation. Lady Strethling's diſtreſs was increaſed; ſhe went again to conſult her huſband, and left the ſighing Rhodolpha to weave new webs.

Whatever remained in doubt, none could now be entertained of the fact, that Mademoiſelle Luſinguen was in a ſituation that could not continue many months. So little concern did the courageous lady teſtify about it, that when ſhe made her appearance at dinner, Lady Strethling was obliged to hint, and that pretty broadly, that common decency required ſhe ſhould confine herſelf to a leſs frequented part of the houſe. Ypſilanti, on pretence of indiſpoſition, had ſent an excuſe by her for her abſence; and Mademoſelle Luſinguen was deſired to ſhare the ſolitude of her friend.

Indignant at this repulſe, but too prudent to give her paſſion vent, ſhe obeyed. Ypſilanti's dejection irritated her; and when ſhe had compelled her to confeſs how ſeverely ſhe felt the calamity of their ſituation, and how impoſſible it

was that she should not take part in the tremendous disgrace they were involved in, Rhodolpha laughed at her weakess, and pledged herself for a safe exit out of all their troubles.—Ypsilanti was shocked at the callosity of her mind, and sunk into silence.

The result of the Earl and Countess's deliberations was, that Lord Firnes should be immediately recalled to answer the charge; and if it was, as they had no doubt it would be, fully substantiated against him, that he should have an alternative offered him either to marry Rhodolpha and retire into an obscure situation, or make her such a compensation as should be judged proper, and immediately accept a wife out of a great family in the neighbourhood, with whom they were as desirous as parents so indulgent could be, of forming an alliance.

The scheme was put in practice.—A confidential servant was dispatched to Lord Firnes with a letter from his father, requiring his instant return. The messenger was strictly charged, on no consideration, to reveal the real cause of this unexpected command, but to hasten the young Viscount's setting out as soon as possible.

In the mean time secrecy was enjoined every one of the family. Rhodolpha was now allowed to appear any where but in her own apartment, or in the garden, unless sent for by Lord or Lady Strethling, who, though they had little affection for her, looked on her with compassion, and did whatever could alleviate her situation, consistent with a due regard to their own honour.

Every affliction that the more amiable and more keen-suffering Ypsilanti had ever struggled with, seemed at this time to array itself in double

force againſt her peace. Her father, her dear Madame Guemené, and her ſtill dearer Caſimir, thoſe guardians of her youth that had kept from her every rude blaſt of fortune, were now loſt to her; and ſhe felt as thrown on the wide ocean of life, without ſecurity, help, or ſkill to reach any port. That on which ſhe might ſafely heve relied—the integrity of her own ſpotleſs heart, her intereſt in the failure of her friend ſeemed to deprive her of. As if they were conjoint beings, ſhe conſidered the pain one endured as inevitably felt by the other; and erring through an amiable miſtake, ſhe felt guilty without cauſe; rejected every diſtinction that the Earl and his lady would willingly have made between them, ſhared all Rhodolpha's retirement, and was much more a penitent.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

WHEN the meſſenger overtook Lord Firnes, who had found very little benefit from change of place, he had not reached Rome, and from the tenor of his father's letter, he conceived hopes, for which he in vain ſought a foundation, that he was recalled to take the hand of Ypſilanti de Bergzeyl. He checked this ſuppoſition as an effuſion of vanity, and gave the letter to Mr. Griffin, at the ſame time expreſſing his readineſs to comply with its contents. His friend ardently longing for his happineſs, fancied he ſaw it, and when he returned the miſſive, gave him joy.

"Of what?" ſaid Lord Firnes, eagerly.

"Of your ſummons. Can you not gueſs who "has dictated it?"

"I *dare* not gueſs."

"Then let me gueſs for you, my Lord.— "Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl is, I fancy, at the "bottom of it."

"Dear Griffin," replied Lord Firnes, graſping his hand with the utmoſt violence, "I dare not hope,

" hope, and yet I cannot forbear. But how is it
" poſſible? Point out to me a few links of proba-
" bility; and I will hope in ſpite of my own opi-
" nion. How can my father or mother have
" come at my ſentiments, and how can they have
" diſpoſed Ypſilanti, ſo buried in grief, to re-
" vive for my ſake? Tell me it is poſſible in any
" way that does not leave her leſs amiable, and I
" ſhall be in extacies."

" Firſt," ſaid Mr. Griffin, " let us aſſure our-
" ſelves, as far as we can, of the fact—that is
" the ſhorteſt way to convince you of its poſſible
" exiſtence. Philip ſeems cautious and reſerved,
" as if he had been charged not to tell too much:
" I ſuppoſe Lord and Lady Strethling chuſe to be
" the bearers of their intelligence themſelves;
" but I think if you were not by, I could learn a
" little that might prevent your ſurpriſe and ex-
" tacies being *fatal* to you."

Lord Firnes immediately withdrew. Mr. Griffin called Philip in, and began to queſtion him obliquely. " He hoped none of the family were
" ill, that Lord Firnes was ſo ſuddenly recalled.

" No, Sir; my Lord and Lady, and the
" Mademoiſelles, are in good health, thank
" God.

" I perceive, Philip, by your caution and your
" countenance you are afraid of ſaying too much.
" I ſcorn to tempt you to tranſgreſs any orders you
" may have received, and therefore if I aſk you a
" queſtion you do not hold yourſelf at liberty to
" anſwer, make no ſcruple of refuſing; but if it
" did not infringe on your duty, I will honeſtly
" tell you it would be a ſatisfaction to Lord Firnes
" and me to know whether the buſineſs he is call-

" ed

" ed home on, is likely to prove agreeable or diſ-
" agreeable to him.

" Agreeable, I ſuppoſe, Sir.

" Is there not a lady in the caſe?

" I believe there may be.

" It is then, I ſuppoſe, Lord Strethling's de-
" ſign to ſettle his ſon. But this I do not aſk
" you.

" It is my Lord's deſign, replied Philip," betrayed a little further than was prudent by his honeſt feelings, " to make the young gentleman do
" juſtice.

" Juſtice, Philip! Lord Firnes was never de-
" ficient in that point.

" Perhaps not: we ſhall ſee what his juſtice
" amounts to very ſoon.

" Were Lord Firnes here," replied Mr. Griffin gravely, " he would now inſiſt on your explaining
" yourſelf.

Philip looked as if fearful of being compelled to ſay more than he ought; and willing to buy the privilege of ſilence by a ſmall ſacrifice, he anſwered with affected jocularity, " Why, Sir,
" when a gentleman has run away with a young
" lady's heart, it is but juſtice he ſhould make her
" ſome amends. All I ſay is, it's pity it was not
" broached before my young Lord went away—
" it might have ſpared him a long journey, and
" the young lady a great deal of crying; and the
" matter might have been huſhed up with leſs
" noiſe. And ſo, Sir, if you pleaſe, don't aſk me
" any more queſtions. I ſhall ſet off again almoſt
" directly, and ſhall ſay my Lord is coming.

" Odds are againſt you, ſaid Mr. Griffin, that
" we are at St. Leonard's before you. Lord
" Firnes will hire no horſes without wings.

" What

" What then, Sir, you think he will be agree-
" able!

" Agreeable? Yes, I think he is very *agreeable*,
" and I dare say the young lady you talk of, thinks
" so too. Yes, yes, I will answer for his being
" *agreeable*, Philip.

" Well, Sir I am very glad of it.—I was very
" much afraid; because you have——Sir, some-
" times when women and ladies too——you
" know, Sir.

" Yes, yes, Philip, I understand you. You
" mean, when ladies fall in love, gentlemen are
" not always in the humour for it; but I can as-
" sure you Lord Firnes fell in love long before the
" lady did, and only ran away from her for fear
" he should be refused.

" Good Lord! exclaimed honest Philip, how
" lucky things fall out! But I am sure my young
" Lord had no reason to fear. Nothing was ever
" yet too hot or too heavy for him, as they say.
" So good day to you, Sir."

Away went Philip to hasten his departure. Mr. Griffin instantly repaired to his anxious friend, and by relating what had passed, overcame his diffident credulity.

Yet delighted as he was, and eager as he was to take possession of the happiness he imagined himself called to, he would not leave Italy without executing the commission Rodolpha had given him on the part of Ypsilanti. Little did he think that it was the fatal moment when that commission was delivered that had produced his dream of joy, and would make him to the keenest regret. The awkward situation he had been discovered in, though at the moment it distressed him, had scarcely ever after recurred to his remembrance. Rhodolpha at

no

no time could boaſt a place in his affections; but he had not ſufficiently penetrated her character to remember her as an object of deteſtation. In ſhort, poor Rhodolpha, in Lord Firnes's mind, had ſunk into a corner of oblivion more provoking to her, had ſhe known it, than the moſt induſtrious animoſity.

His Lordſhip's punctilious diſcharge of his promiſe required him to ſeek the Baron de Bergzeyl, unaccompanied by Mr. Griffin. He had told him ingenuouſly how he was bound, and then had proceeded in his enquiries, but with ſo little ſucceſs, that he was on the point of giving up the ſearch in deſpair, when at the laſt inn he could reaſonably enquire at, he heard that a gentleman had lately come into the neighbourhood, who lived with ſuch ſecrecy as made it probable he had fled his own country in diſtreſs. A very ſhort time before, his informer added, another gentleman, with two little girls, had come to reſide with him: this circumſtance gave a degree of confirmation to the evidence: Lord Firnes doubted not that theſe perſons were Colonel Luſinguen and his daughters, and with a conſiderably increaſed hope of ſucceſs, he poſtponed the continuation of his journey, and devoted a day to this duty.

His information directed him to a village, conſiſting only of five or ſix poor houſes, between Lucca and Piſa: thither he went from Leghorn, and no one knowing the Baron by his uſual appellation, he was forced to viſit each of theſe ſmall dwellings till he ſhould find one with domeſtic features like what he ſought. The firſt he entered had women and children in it: the ſecond a man working at ſome ſervile occupation; another was a ſmall ſhop containing an analyſis of all the wants

of

of the place. But in the fourth were indications ſuch as he looked for. A man, under forty years of age, of a gloomy aſpect, but with the external of a gentleman, was ſitting by a ſmall fire with a book in his hand. Lord Firnes ſtopped for a moment to conſider under what character he ſhould addreſs him, ſo as not to alarm him; for his looks on the entrance of a ſtranger declared him not convinced of his ſecurity, or elſe habitually fearful.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

THE maſter of the humble dwelling roſe, and in good Italian begged to know what had procured him the honour of a ſtranger's viſit. Lord Firnes aſked if a German officer of the name of Luſinguen did not live there. "He lives here," replied the other, "but he is not now at home."—"Might I preſume to aſk a few queſtions?" ſaid Lord Firnes, without ſtepping a foot forwarder. The gentleman laid down his book, and ſeemed to think the invitation of pointing to a ſeat the utmoſt his politeneſs could extend to.

His viſitor aſked no more. He ſeated himſelf, and, well-bred and travelled as he was, felt at a loſs how to addreſs a man he longed to be acquainted with, yet feared to repel by attempting to commence an acquaintance; as the child in chace of a ſplendid butterfly extends and withdraws his hands alternately, even when he hopes it within his reach, dreading leſt in the very act of ſnatching, his gaudy prize ſhould eſcape him.

The Baron, for it was he himſelf, was too cautious and had too much need of caution to expoſe himſelf by being too liberal in his encouragements: he again requeſted to hear what had procured him this interview. As he ſpoke, his features opened into a placid ſmile of Ypſilanti; and Lord Firnes now wanting no further aſſurance that he was right in his application; and rouſed by the delightful recollection this ſimilarity of countenance excited, without farther preface, ſaid haſtily, "I am Engliſh: I am a gentleman, a man of honour, and one too much intereſted in your preſervation to betray you. You are, or I am much deceived, the unfortunate Baron de Bergzeyl: it is at your daughter's requeſt I ſee you; and my preſent buſineſs is to offer your ſituation every comfort mine can procure for it."

The pallidneſs of fear would have overſpread the countenance of the aſtoniſhed Baron, had not the glow of joy at hearing the words *your daughter*, counteracted it. Lord Firnes proceeded to relieve his diſtreſs by a relation of all that happened ſince his family joined the unhappy trio at Oſtend; and not once queſtioning the authority on which he ſpoke, concluded a narrative that had excited a variety of emotion in his hearer, by an account of what he conceived to be his own proſpect, and, as if he had been already the huſband of Ypſilanti, inſiſted on exerciſing the privilege he claimed of eſtabliſhing her father's peace. Young man like, and lover-like, all he could promiſe fell ſhort of his deſire to promote the happineſs of her ſo dear to him, and one ſo dear to him, and one ſo dear to her. Nothing was to be conſidered as an impediment; and the

Baron,

Baron, as if a ſtranger to kindneſs, and charmed with it, began to ſhake off his reſerve, and ſeemed to glow under the cheriſhing hand of ſuch benevolence.

He informed Lord Firnes, that the Vringen family had abated nothing of their rancour towards him, which the conſequences of own conduct made him confeſs juſtifiable: he ſaid he had renounced every thing they could claim, and he could recall, having reſerved to himſelf nothing but the produce of his ſmall patrimony at Lauffen, with which he had purchaſed the houſe he was in, and a ſmall garden adjoining it. He confeſſed that poverty was now his lot; and that the means of his future ſubſiſtence were precarious. His friend Luſinguen, whom no ſorrows could detach, and who, though he ſpared not the reprehenſion of his faults, was diſpoſed to accept his repentance, and to alleviate his diſtreſſes, had quitted Germany, and from the pureſt motives of friendſhip had taken up his abode with him. A letter which Rhodolpha had written to him, informing him of the fate of his ſon and of Madame Guemené, had never reached him, he therefore was yet to hear of this misfortune. "'Tis the ſevereſt he can feel," ſaid the Baron, ruminating on the ſad cataſtrophe, "this ſon was dearer to him than all his other children; there was, I am convinced, ſome particular reaſon for this preference —what I know not; for intimate as we are, I poſſeſs none of his confidence. Early in our acquaintance he ſeemed wounded at every recurrence to domeſtic circumſtances: I, having many motives to ſimilar concealment, acquieſced in his; and the conſequence is, that we are ſtrangers to every

every thing reſpecting each other prior to our caſual meeting at Hoenſdern."

A converſation of ſome hours was not finiſhed when Colonel Luſinguen entered. Lord Firnes felt all that ſenſibility can feel when in the features of this ſtranger to him he traced a ſtrong reſemblance to thoſe of him whom he was beginning to love when fate broke the ſcarcely-wrought band. He could not attempt a recital ſo galling to a parent; but haſtily took his leave, promiſing to defer his journey till the following day, when he hoped to learn how he might beſt relieve the Baron's ſituation. He returned to his inn, penſive amidſt all his exultation; and when he met his friend Griffin, ſuffered in all its force the miſery of being compelled to confine his ſenſations to his own boſom.

On the following morning he again viſited the Baron, and was much relieved by hearing he had diſcharged the painful duty of informing Luſinguen, whom unrelenting fortune ſeemed to purſue into the cloſeſt receſſes, of his irreparable loſs. No previous diſcipline, ſhort of that adverſity had from his youth inured him to, could have taught him unrepining ſubmiſſion under ſuch a calamity; but Luſinguen could kiſs the rod, and bleſſed kind providence that threeſcore years and ten were nearly the boundary of human exiſtence.

The warm feelings of youth were leſs eaſy to reſtrain in the friend than the ſorrow of the father; and Lord Firnes, whom nothing but his ſympathetic nature excluded at this moment from the title of a perfectly happy man *in idea*, found no perſonal felicity preponderate againſt the ſocial affections. Without an alteration of his

his countenance, for that he *could* command, the tears rolled from his eyes when he again saw the robbed parent, who far more collected, ſmiled benevolently on this indication of a heart, and preached to him the comfort he himſelf wanted.

All the Viſcount's eloquence was exerted to prevail on thoſe two friends to accompany him to England; but it could not prevail. Nothing could tempt Luſinguen again to try the haunts of men; and the fear of detection operated on the Baron too forcibly to be counteracted. All Lord Firnes could obtain was an acceptance of his offer to ſettle the Baron in what comfort and ſecurity he could, as ſoon as he had married Ypſilanti, whom he purpoſed bringing into Italy in the ſpring. Her father's ſpirit would not brook any overtures to temporary relief; and Lord Firnes, ſorry he could do no more, ſet off for England.

On arriving at St. Leonard's, he was not permitted to ſee either of the foreigners till he had a long conference with the Earl his father, who with more gentleneſs than could have been expected, accuſed him of a breach of all that ſhould have held him to duty, in having illicitly obtained the affections of one whom he was bound in honour to protect as a helpleſs gueſt, and whom it was the height of perfidy to delude.

As he did not name Rhodolpha, and all he ſaid would have applied to her friend. Lord Firnes continued in his error; and attributing in his own mind every thing to Ypſilanti, thought his father rather

rather too ſerious; and ſtrove to end his apprehenſions, by promiſing every acquieſcence that could be aſked. Lord Strethling to whom this was little ſatisfaction, for both to him and his lady the neceſſity of their ſon's marrying Rhodolpha at all, and eſpecially under the preſent circumſtances, was highly mortifying, ſeemed ſtill unappeaſed; and Lord Firnes was on the point of ſhewing his ignorance by naming Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl, when a thought ſtruck the Earl, and determined him to uſe more fineſſe than he had ever in the courſe of his life practiſed.

Rumination on the vexatious conſequence of his ſon's unruly paſſions had induced him, though reluctant, to prefer the alternative of his marrying Rhodolpha. Fearful that her appearance might convert the young man's pliable diſpoſition into obſtinacy, and ſatisfied from herſelf and his reliance on Philip's taciturnity, that he was yet ignorant of this important truth, he now reſolved to bind him to the performance of his willing promiſe, before he was informed of it; and that he might have no means of retracting, to keep him out of ſight of Rhodolpha till he was to take her hand.

On account of Lord Firnes's ſtay at Leghorn, Philip had arrived before him; and having reported to the family the Viſcount's *agreeable* diſpoſition, every thing had been got into the utmoſt forwardneſs for the wedding. As it was not in its circumſtances very honourable, all conſiderations of rank and port were laid aſide, and a ſolicitude for privacy took their place. Mr. Griffin was deſtined by Lord Strethling to perform the

ceremony

ceremony. His Lordſhip was therefore not a little vexed to ſee his ſon return without him; nor was the excuſe Lord Firnes brought, that he had gone a few miles out of his way to ſee his mother, half ſo ſatisfactory as the aſſurance that he would reach St. Leonard's within two hours.

CHAP.

CHAP. LXIV.

LORD Strethling, anxious to excesſ for the concluſion of this diſagreeable buſineſs, purſued his plan without attention to any thing beſide. Leaving his ſon in the library, where he had received him, he locked him in while he went to announce his arrival and his obedience. Lady Strethling was impatient to ſee him, but yielded to her huſband's requeſt that ſhe would poſtpone it, though in her maternal eagerneſs ſhe could not ſee the neceſſity of ſuch caution.

She carried the important news to Ypſilanti and Rhodolpha; and, with a degree of diſintereſtedneſs that did her honour, congratulated the latter on the approaching termination of her ſorrows in a way that, if the young lady could have bluſhed at receiving unmerited kindneſs, ought to have covered her with ſhame. Nor were kind words all that ſhe could have rejected, as not pertaining to her ſituation. Lady Strethling, on whoſe bounty Ypſilanti had with the moſt grateful

ful reluctance, and Rhodolpha with the moſt unfeeling, yet diſſembled greedineſs, depended entirely ever ſince their caſual meeting, now added to her former gifts whatever ſhe thought ſuitable for the occaſion; and Rhodolpha, while ſhe was plotting the ruin of the family, decked herſelf without remorſe at the expence of thoſe ſhe was betraying.

Lord Firnes could not at all underſtand why he was a priſoner, and bore his confinement and ſolitude rather impatiently. At laſt, and within the time he had named, Mr. Griffin came: he was ſhewn into a parlour to Lord Strethling, who was buſied in adjuſting a ſettlement for Rhodolpha. The inſtant Mr. Griffin entered, Lord Strethling ſaying only, "Griffin, you muſt marry my ſon immediately," went to fetch the bride. Mr. Griffin was gone to get rid of his boots when his lordſhip returned to the room with the three ladies: he left them and went to releaſe Lord Firnes, whoſe impatience was at its climax.

Taking his mother's hand as he paſſed her, his eyes darted inſtantly on his dear Ypſilanti; and quitting Lady Strethling, almoſt without ſpeaking, his joy was not to be repreſſed, and he would have caught Ypſilanti in his arms, but ſhe with a coyneſs he did not expect, and with a look that awed him into recollection, evaded his embrace, and by an attitude more intelligible than words, directed his attention to her who was ſuppoſed to have the beſt right to it.

Lord Firnes, imagining his offence to be only a tranſgreſſion of form, endeavoured to atone for it by paying general compliments, which Mademoiſelle Luſinguen received with downcaſt eyes, feigned tears, and all the ſilent hypocriſy ſhe could

could ſo well practiſe, which was little regarded by him ſhe was playing on. So entirely was he engroſſed by Ypſilanti, that he conſidered the civilities required of him only as a means of prevailing on her to receive his more ardent expreſſions, and glancing ſlightly at all things elſe, his eye did not reſt long enough on Rhodolpha to point out to him any ſingularity in her appearance. But when his father, with a heavy ſigh, led her forward, and taking Lord Firnes's hand, commanded him to accept as his wife the woman he had irreparably injured, the myſtery was unravelled, and he ſaw how cruelly he had deceived himſelf.

Reddening with indignation, he wreſted his hand from the Earl's, and poſitively refuſed the acquieſcence demanded. He inſiſted on hearing what was the injury he was required to atone for, denied all knowledge of any thing that could compel him to give his hand where his heart never had had a ſhare; and in the fury of his reſentment avowed his love for Ypſilanti de Bergzeyl.

Rhodolpha wept, Ypſilanti fainted, and all was diſtreſs and confuſion. Each one doubted whether the reſt were in their ſenſes. At this juncture, in came Mr. Griffin, who could only add to the embarraſſment; for he was as effectually miſled as his noble friend. When Lord Strethling looked to him for an explanation, he could only reply, that Lord Firnes's ready obedience was founded on the idea that it was claimed for Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl; and that, as far as the moſt intimate acquaintance would enable him to judge, he thought he might venture to aſſert, that Lord Firnes never had entertained the

ſmalleſt

ſmalleſt intention of marrying Mademoiſelle Lufinguen.

Lord Strethling now took Mr. Griffin into another room, and in that where the ladies were, the confuſion was ſo inextricable that no one ventured to interrupt the ſilence they ſunk into.—Lord Firnes was all agitation. Ypſilanti diſtracted with doubt, and grieved to think ſhe had been the cauſe of miſtake and uneaſineſs, withdrew; Rhodolpha followed her, and the Viſcount was left to prove his innocence if he could, to his mother.

The ſincereſt pity took poſſeſſion of Ypſilanti's boſom, when ſhe recollected the ſituation of her unfortunate friend, whom ſhe conſidered as ſuffering moſt unjuſtly by her own excuſable weakneſs, and the perfidious caprice of her ſeducer. Anxious to give Rhodolpha every comfort, ſhe on her knees aſſured her, that even could the image of her beloved Caſimir be ever eraſed from her heart, no earthly conſideration could induce her to marry Lord Firnes. All her influence over him ſhe promiſed ſhould be exerted only to compel him to be juſt; and ſhould he ſtill refuſe, ſhe would prefer ſharing her fate, whatever it might be, to the ſplendid infamy of taking what was another's right.

Rhodolpha, all grief and gratitude, intreated her friend to ſpare her feelings, and never to mention Lord Firnes as deſerving of reſentment: as if too generous and too fond to ſuffer juſtice, ſhe was heaping condemnation on herſelf for all that paſſed, taking the blame entirely on herſelf, and proteſting with equal ſolemnity and artifice, that nothing ſhould ever prevail on her to accuſe

him ſhe ſtill, notwithſtanding his rejection of her, loved more than her life.

The deceiver and the deceived had ſpent about an hour thus, when they were ſummoned to attend the Earl and Counteſs; and Rhodolpha was called on to prefer her accuſation againſt Lord Firnes. He himſelf with all the warmth of exaſperated innocence, inſiſted on her revealing whatever ſhe could make againſt him. "I will reveal nothing," ſaid we, with hypocritical compoſure. "Acquit me, my Lord, of having any hand in your preſent diſtreſs: the diſcovery was made contrary to my wiſhes; and but for that fatal night when I accidentally fainted in your chamber, I might have died ſafe from the enquiries of thoſe who in their very friendſhip and benevolence torture me." She had ſcarcely pronounced theſe words, when her voice failed, and ſhe was carried out of the room, to all appearance inſenſible.

Every particle of Lord Firnes's airy hope had vaniſhed: his paſſion was forced to give way to his zeal in vindicating himſelf. Rhodolpha was admired by all for her heroic virtue, except by Mr. Griffin, whoſe confidence in Lord Firnes remained unſhaken, and who declared, that his word would go farther with him than the atteſtations of millions of witneſſes.

Enquiry was now excited as to the circumſtance Mademoiſelle Luſinguen had alluded to. Lord Firnes related every circumſtance of her unſeaſonable viſit to him, except the purpoſe ſhe came for. Ypſilanti had left the room with Rhodolpha; he therefore could not obtain from her the diſpenſation he judged himſelf bound in honour

to

to wait for, nor would he, for fear of involving her, hint that she had it in her power to account for it; but imagining his conduct at the time might go some way towards his exculpation, he called up those servants who had seen Mademoiselle in his chamber, and requested them, without reserve, to tell all they knew.

CHAP. XLV.

THE malice of Ricci, his valet, had now an opportunity of venting itſel, and aided Rhodolpha's deſign more than ſhe could have hoped. He gave his evidence in a way that, without departing from the truth, was ſufficient to convince all preſent that he had been an agent in the buſineſs, or at leaſt was privy to it; and when Lord Firnes, provoked beyond all bearing, at the iniquity that was oppreſſing him, threw his purſe on the ground, and ordered him to take it as a diſcharge, and to quit his ſervice and his ſight inſtantly, the injured Viſcount, unſkilled in the obliquities of vice, was not at all aware that he was giving credibility to the raſcal's falſehood. Ricci, ſeizing the purſe and chinking the guineas, cried out, "Evviva l'amore! Evviva il padrone! non ſono ſempre i ſervitori fideli coſi ricompenſati."

The

The conſternation was far from diminiſhing; and Lord Firnes ſeeing the tide of malice overwhelming him, that he might not be compelled to ruin himſelf by giving way to it, deſired a few hours for conſideration. This favour was granted him: he ſhut himſelf up with his friend Griffin, and peremptorily required to know whether he too judged him guilty.

"Far from it, my Lord," ſaid Mr. Griffin: "I think I know you too well to believe you capable of what you are accuſed of, or of denying it had it been true: beſide I flatter myſelf I am ſo far in your confidence, that you would at firſt, if not afterwards, have acquainted me with the impreſſion Mademoiſelle Luſinguen had made on you. She is not the ſort of woman I ſhould ever have ſuppoſed you faſcinated by; but your placing your affections on her friend, I expected from the firſt moment it became poſſible."

"I am happy then," replied Lord Firnes; "and if you love me, Griffin, you have reaſon to rejoice that you cannot ſuſpect me: for by all that is ſacred, had you too joined the general infamous cry againſt me, I would not have ſurvived the diſgrace. My piſtols are loaded: and this hour, as it put an end to my ill-founded hopes, ſhould have put an end to the malice of my enemies."

So dreadful a purpoſe had the effect of the moſt determined menace on Mr. Griffin, who ſeeing the prudence of adoping whatever could act as a cordial on his noble friend's wounded mind, ſaid all that could encourage him to oppoſe himſelf to adverſe fortune. They ſat down coolly to diſcuſs the ſubject, and to endeavour to find out the ſource of their diſtreſs; but all their perſpicuity

ſpicuity was was too little; Rhodolpha had behaved with ſuch conſummate art, that ſhe was unſuſpected, and appeared rather like one of the oppreſſed than the oppreſſor. Ypſilanti, no one that was in the leaſt intimate with her, could for a moment ſuppoſe capable of deceit; and as for Lord and Lady Strethling, they were acting ſo totally againſt their own intereſts, that nobody could judge them the contrivers of the plot.

One method, and one only, preſented itſelf as adequate to the grand purpoſe of exculpation. Mr. Griffin propoſed to Lord Firnes the requiring Mademoiſelle Luſinguen explicitly to acquit him: her acquieſcence would not be doubted of, as ſhe ſeemed averſe to joining in the juſtice of the reſt of the family; and it was determined to requeſt it.

This was no ſooner reſolved on than put in execution; and in the preſence of his father and mother, Ypſilanti, and Mr. Griffin, Lord Firnes addreſſed Mademoiſelle Luſinguen, by telling her it was in her power alone to clear up the error his family was involved in, and deſiring her to give them this unequivocal ſatisfaction.

The preface ruined the effect the requeſt ſhould have produced. It gave the artful Rhodolpha an opportunity of interrupting Lord Firnes by profeſſions of readineſs to obey him. She obſerved "that her own ſituation was ſuch as made her "entirely deſperate; and that the only ſhadow of "comfort left for her to catch at was the poſſibi-"lity of reſtoring him to the regard of his family. "For this privilege," ſaid ſhe, in a ſeeming agony of frantic affection, "there is nothing can be "named which I would not forego. Neither in "this world, nor in that I am haſtening to, have

"I aught

" I aught to hope. Speak, Lord Firnes; ſay
" what you require, and I will do it."

" Say then," ſaid Lord Firnes, " that I am in-
" nocent of what is laid to my charge, and that
" I am under no obligation to marry you."

Rhodolpha dropped on her knees, and raiſed her hands as if about to make the moſt ſolemn proteſtation.—" Hold," cried Lord Strethling——" Mademoiſelle be ſilent. What are you going
" to do?" ſaid he, turning to his ſon,—" You are
" going to make this unhappy creature perjure
" herſelf; and as you have ruined her peace
" here, to make her forfeit it hereafter. Were
" ſhe to ſwear ever ſo ſolemnly to your inno-
" cence, I would not believe her:—the deſpera
" tion you have reduced her to, deprives her of
" her reaſon, and conſequently of all claim to
" credit. The whole world could not acquit
" you, Firnes, and nothing but your inſtantly
" marrying her ſhall prevent my diſinheriting
" you, which I can as eaſily do as ſay it. If a
" villain muſt bear my name and title, he ſhall
" at leaſt want the means to make himſelf noto-
" rious.—Get out of my ſight, and do not pre-
" ſume to come near me till you have learnt to
" be honeſt. I have been an indulgent father to
" you, becauſe I thought you deſerving of indul-
" gence. You have preſumed on my affection;
" but you ſhall find that indignation not often
" rouſed, is the ſevereſt. I will not hear a word
" you have to ſay. Be gone; and if you do not
" by this time to-morow profeſs yourſelf ready to
" marry Mademoiſelle Luſinguen, be aſſured you
" will find yourſelf Earl of Strethling without a
" ſhilling."

" Tis

"'Tis neither your fortune nor your favour, "Sir," replied Lord Firnes resolutely, "that "shall induce me to disgrace you by obeying "you.—I will marry no man's cast-off mistress; "but trust an hour will come when you will be "undeceived, and must *commend* my obstinacy; "till when, you shall always know where I may "be found."

The Viscount left the room instantly. Mr. Griffin followed him; and though he wished to moderate his anger, he could not blame it, nor attempt to divert him from his resolution of immediately quitting a scene of such unfathomable wickedness. Debating on the route he should take, his Lordship preferred returning to Italy, on pretence of a wish to visit that country; but in reality for the sake of seeing the Baron de Bergzeyl, and informing him how cruelly he had been disappointed. This determined on, he wrote three letters; one to his mother, protesting his innocence, and intreating a suspension of her opinion on this intricate business; another to Ypsilanti, informing her of his having found her father, and of his intention to re-visit him; and a third to Rhodolpha, conjuring her, if she was not dead to all sense of danger, to do him justice, by revealing the real author of her present distress. This duty discharged, he ordered his chaise and one servant only to attend him, and, accompanied by Mr. Griffin, set off for London, to take up what money he had in readiness for his expences.

A marriage of five and twenty years' standing had hitherto been uninterrupted by the least domestic jar between Lord Strethling and his wife. United by the firmest of all attachments, a sense of each other's

other's merits, they had ever ſhewn a readineſs to yield reciprocally, if their opinions did not perfectly agree; and their affection had been ſo entirely centered in their only ſon, that there ſeemed but one mind. But now the ſerpent they had been ſo generouſly cheriſhing, poiſoned all their comfort. Lord Strethling's juſtice and honour were called on to oppoſe natural affection. The more tender ſex could not ſupport the conflict equally, nor approve the ſtoical ſeverity her offspring ſuffered under. Pity for her ſon half inclined her to believe him innocent; but in this firſt exertion of oppoſing power, feeling ſhe had no weight, ſhe was forced to ſubmit; and could only conſole herſelf by diſpatching Philip to overtake Lord Firnee with a conſolatory letter, and a ſum of money ſhe feared he might want.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

IT was a moſt unpleaſant change that had taken place in the family at St. Leonard's. Gloomy diſtruſt and anxiety gave a ſad hue to every one's mind. Mademoiſelle de Bergzeyl was rendered more unhappy than ever by the diſtreſs ſhe was witneſs to, and ardently longed to rejoin her father in his obſcurity. Mademoiſelle Luſinguen played her part incomparably, and no kindneſs was wanting on the part of the deluded Earl that could alleviate her *lamentable* ſituation. As if it had been his duty to atone for his ſon's deficiencies, he treated her with a diſtinction ſhe no way deſerved, which ſhe repaid by all the blandiſhments of art, while ſhe laughed at his credulity, and ſported with his feelings.

The Counteſs, though not at all behind-hand with his Lordſhip in affording Rhodolpha the comforts of commiſeration, began to grow a little ſhy in her deportment; and her fondneſs for Lord Firnes being entirely rouſed by the ſeverity inflicted

ed on him, ſhe found it eaſier to ſuſpect and conſequently diſlike Modemoiſelle Luſinguen, than to condemn her ſon *in toto*, and baniſh him from her affection. But yet, not having hit on the preciſe point of ſuſpicion, ſhe could only when moſt diſturbed, interrogate Rhodolpha in general; and ſuch was the art of the reſpondent, that ſhe began to give up the matter in deſpair. Still, however, guided, as the beſt of us are too often, and not ſo juſtificably, by her paſſions rather than her reaſon, her temper evidently ſoured towards Rhodolpha; and the differences of opinion between her and the Earl on the ſubject of Lord Firnes's treatment, were more frequent and more tenaciouſly maintained.

Rhodolpha's penetration immediately diſcovered the change againſt her; and as it ſoon roſe to a height that alarmed her for continuance in a place ſhe was, in her humility, perfectly content wtih, ſhe began to take meaſures for ſtrengthening her ſecurity, and, like moſt over-wiſe fools, by her aſſiduity endangered it ſtill farther.

Lady Strethling had gone ſo far as to remonſtrate againſt the violation of decency in ſuffering Mademoiſelle Luſinguen to paſs the time of her confinement at St. Leonard's. Not at all diſpoſed to grudge whatever could contribute to her comfort at ſuch a time, ſhe had propoſed the hiring a ſmall houſe for her at a diſtance, when ſhe ſhould be maintained at their charge till the affair was cleared up. Ricci, Lord Firnes's valet, who had had art enough to keep in the family, overheard this point diſcuſſed between Lord and Lady Strethling; and having now and then received, as a reward for liſtening, half-a-crown from Mademoiſelle Luſinguen, (out of the money her deceived protectors liberally gave her) he carried this

this intelligence to the ſame market, and found his account in it. Rhodolpha, guilty, and conſequently timid, feared ſtill worſe than this removal, and painted to her imagination nothing ſhort of what ſhe ſo well merited. She therefore, as her only reſource, wrote at firſt privacy a long letter to Count Herman Vringen, revealing her ſituation, and demanding his regard. The hope of winning favour by treachery, had prompted her to conclude her letter with a diſcloſure of all that would put the Baron de Bergzeyl and his daughter in his father's power; but conſidering that ſhe had ſupplied the place of Ypſilanti only through miſtake, and ſhould ſhe point out a ſuperior object, ſhe herſelf might ſink into neglect, ſhe concealed the ſheet, and re-writing her letter confined herſelf to her own ſtory, and to a requiſition of a large ſum of money, as the only poſſible means of bribing her to a ſilence ſhe ſuppoſed Count Herman intereſted in.

Of this prudent ſtep ſhe wiſhed no one in the houſe to be informed; but as it was impoſſible for her to convey her letter herſelf to the poſt-town, ſhe was forced to truſt it to other hands. A ſervant of a rank too low for her to ſpeak to without ſuſpicion, was uſually employed in this office; Ricci was out of the way; Rhodolpha was too impatient to loſe the poſt by waiting for him. Blaming herſelf for her fears, ſhe at laſt reſolved to make Philip her mediator, and giving him the letter, ordered him to ſend it. Here again her cunning played her falſe. Had ſhe added nothing to her orders, they would have been implicitly obeyed; but thinking it neceſſary to charge Philip not to let any of the family ſee the letter, or know ſhe had written it, ſhe awakened

kened in this ſimple fellow a ſuſpicion that he could give no account for, and which induced him to carry the letter firſt to his lady, whoſe more immediate ſervant he was.

Lady Strethling, whoſe fermenting mind was ready to explode at the firſt colluſion, on ſeeing this letter, and hearing the injunctions delivered with it, could not heſitate to conclude ſome myſtery inveloped in it, which it would be a ſatisfaction to her to unravel. She was juſt going to break the ſeal, when her intereſt gave way to a ſenſe of general propriety, and the reſpect due to her gueſt: ſhe checked herſelf, and only ordered Philip to deſire Mademoiſelle Luſinguen to come to her.—Honeſt Philip, not at all ſhrinking from the conſequences of doing what he thought his duty, delivered the meſſage, and followed the young lady to the Counteſs's apartment. Not daring to intrude there, he, as he threw open the door for her, ſaid, "I have carried your letter, madam, to my Lady."—Rhodolpha had obtained Engliſh enough for the common colloquial purpoſes: ſhe underſtood Philip, and giving him one of her ſevereſt frowns as a chaſtiſement for his inſolence, ſhe, ſomewhat ſtaggered, but not daunted, preſented herſelf before Lady Strethling, who addreſſing her in milder terms than could have been expected, ſtating the terrible anxiety ſhe was labouring under, and conjuring her by every conſideration of her own precarious ſtate and future well-being to be ingenious, requeſted her premiſſion to ſee what that letter contained.

She held it in her hand towards Rhodolpha while ſhe ſpoke, as if politely wiſhing rather that ſhe ſhould break it open herſelf. But if ſhe expected this condeſcenſion, ſhe was baulked; for

for the young lady, tho' ſhe took it, and with ſome geſtures indicating reſpect, had not the ſmalleſt intention of gratifying ſuch curioſity, but thruſting it into the fire ſhe ſtood near, declared no one ſhould be allowed to read what ſhe intended only for the inſpection of another.

Lady Strethling, though diſappointed of the ſatisfaction ſhe had expected, was, by Rhodolpha's conduct in this particular, confirmed in her opinion, that there was ground for ſuſpicion. Mademoiſelle had left her indignantly; and her reſentment leaving a wild field for conjecture, the Counteſs, in meditating on it, left no poſſibility unexamined. The truth at length ſtruck her mind with that ſort of conviction we feel when we gueſs right. Lord Strethling was from home: not having therefore an opportunity of divulging her thoughts, ſhe had time to weigh the ſuperior advantage of concealing them; and as his lordſhip and ſhe had jarred ſo frequently on this topic, and ſhe did not care to riſque the indignity of being found in an error, ſhe reſolved to act ſecretly, and wait the event ſilently.

Delay was to be riſqued. Rhodolpha, ſhe hoped, could not replace her letter to go by the firſt mail; but to ſecure this advantage, ſhe ordered all the letters for that day to be brought to her before they were carried to the town. She then ſat down, and wrote in French to Count Harmen Vringen, whoſe addreſs ſhe had had time to con while waiting for Rhodolpha; and ſtating, that ſhe had Mademoiſelles de Bergzeyl and Luſinguen under her protection, and that the latter was in a ſituation that demanded particular attention; required peremptorily to know of the Count, as a man of honour, whether ſhe had

not

not a particular claim on him. To induce him to a confeſſion, ſhe promiſed no harm ſhould reſult to him from it, and begged it only as a means of clearing the character of a nobleman who at preſent lay under a ſuſpicion extremely derogatory to his character.

Having thus diſburdened her mindmuch to her ſatisfaction, ſhe endeavoured to conceal from her gueſts the agitation ſhe had ſuffered. Rhodolpha was at firſt uneaſy, as not knowing what to fear; but Lord Strethling, on his return, bringing her a load of preſents, and, as if purpoſely in oppoſition to his wife, heaping careſſes on her, ſhe began to think the ſtronger party on her ſide, and and determined to brave the ſtorm, not once ſuſpecting the courſe Lady Strethling had taken.

END OF VOL. I.

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